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celeb buzz Pg41

Oprah earning $385M a year

Loonie plunges to lowest level since last fall

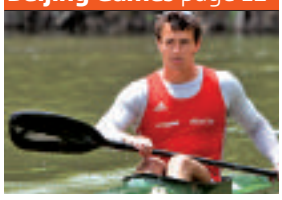
ECONOMY Canada's dollar fell to its lowest level in nearly a year and the Toronto Stock Exchange tumbled along with it yesterday amid a major sell-off of resource stocks and commodities — from crude oil to cocoa and copper — prompting some analysts to officially declare the end of the red hot commodity rally. "Our general sense is the commodities boom is over," said Sal Guatieri, senior economist at the Bank of Montreal. The loonie suffered as the U.S. dollar strengthened yesterday after the U.S. Federal Reserve Board left interest rates unchanged, as was widely expected. The Canadian dollar closed 1.38 cents lower yesterday to 95.98 cents US after falling as low as 95.68 earlier in the day, its lowest level since last September.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Canada page 6

Beheading accused pleads for death

Beijing Games page 12



Medal dreams for kayaker

China **Olympics**

RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Chinese drummers prepare to enter the Olympic Stadium in Beijing yesterday as preparations continue for Friday's opening ceremonies.

MPPs see no remedy in health tax review

Ontario's controversial health premium is being reviewed but the process is a "sham" because Premier Dalton McGuinty has already decided the tax is here to stay, opposition MPPs said yesterday.

That makes it unlikely Ontarians will see any changes to the levy, despite pleas from several municipalities that it be amended so thousands of their workers no longer get the premium covered by taxpayers.

"The problem is this is a sham of a process," Progressive Conservative MPP Tim Hudak said after a brief three-hour legislative committee hearing into the tax yesterday, accusing the premier of putting "his hands over his ears."

"They're going through the motions with these hearings."
NDP MPP Peter Tabuns

The mayor of London told the legislature's finance committee that her city — through residential property taxes — is footing a bill of more than $800,000 a year for the health premiums of some civic workers.

The review that began yesterday was legally required under the 2004 legislation that created the health premium of up to $900 per person, raising almost $3 billion this year.

"They're going through the motions with these hearings," said New Democrat MPP Peter Tabuns, urging the government to exempt people earning less than $48,000 annually from the health premium.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Cyclists cheer bike trail

Construction of the first trail to be built on an abandoned rail line in the Greater Toronto Area has finally begun, 10 years after the idea was first conceived.

Rough grading on the northern half of the highly anticipated bike trail was completed earlier this summer, and this week a crew will begin building steps to elevated sections of the path.

"I'm really thrilled that it's finally happening. It's been so long," said Netami Stuart, of the group Friends of the West Toronto Railpath.

Idea

• The idea for the West Toronto Railpath was first raised by landscape architects Victor Ford and Associates in a 1998 report to the Toronto Cycling Committee as one of 46 cycling trail opportunities in rail and hydro corridors in the GTA.

Still, she's holding her excitement in check. That's because the southern half of the trail is in limbo. It will remain stalled until the fate of the high-speed rail link from Union Station to Pearson airport is decided, say city officials.

When completed, the WTR will cut diagonally across the west end, from the Junction to Strachan Avenue, along a rail corridor that was once part of the Grand Trunk Railway and dates back more than a century.

Though cyclists have been the most excited about the five-kilometre trail, it will also be open to in-line skaters, dog walkers and joggers looking for a shortcut to the western edge of the city core.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Stolen goods recovered
Two men face charges after goods worth up to $25,000 were stolen from storage units in Brampton. Helder Rodrigues, 21, and Edwin Brooks, 29, face related charges. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

Money for bike networks

Mississauga-based Walk & Bike for Life has received $136,000 from the Ministry of Health Promotion to help communities plan integrated walking and biking networks. Starting in September, workshops will be held in 22 communities, mostly in southwestern Ontario, to help planners and local groups build routes that can be incorporated in residents' commutes. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Tomorrow's Metro

Just peachy
Juicy, ripe peaches are one of the pleasures of summer. Barb Holland shares her recipe for Warm Peach and Blueberry Tarts with Custard.

metronews.ca
What's online today.

Watch a report on a Winnipeg police shooting that has the native community seeking answers
Read today's news highlights in Metro Snapshot
Check movie showtimes, trailers and reviews at metronews.ca/movies
Search for jobs using Metro's Workopolis search
Play online Jumble Jong!

News in brief

MUGGINGS Police are looking for three youths in two east-end muggings. In one incident a man in his 20s was stabbed in the back of his neck near Morningside and Old Finch avenues.

ARREST A Pickering man has been arrested for possessing child pornography. Christopher Adam Grant, 46, faces child pornography charges.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Inquest sought in girl's death

Katelynn Sampson, 7, was found dead in apartment early Sunday

Ontario's child and youth advocate is calling for an inquest into the violent death of seven-year-old Katelynn Sampson.

"I think that any time a child dies under these circumstances, we as a community, as a society, have something to learn," Irwin Elman said yesterday.

Katelynn was found dead in an apartment in the Queen Street West and Lansdowne Avenue area early Sunday, shortly after her legal guardian Donna Irving, 29, called 9-1-1 and claimed the girl had stopped breathing while choking on food.

Irving was arrested and charged with second-degree murder after EMS personnel arrived and saw signs of trauma on the victim's body that contradicted the guardian's story.

"I think that any time a child dies under these circumstances, we as a community, as a society, have something to learn."
Irwin Elman, Ontario child, youth advocate

Homicide Det.-Sgt. Steve Ryan said yesterday seeing her body was "probably the worst thing I've seen in 20 years of policing — the worst."

"Some of those injuries did not appear to be fresh injuries," he said, adding that Katelynn had apparently been sleeping on the floor in one of the bedrooms.

Police are pleading for anyone who suspected Katelynn was suffering abuse to come forward.

The Toronto Star has learned that Irving had gained full custody of the little girl without any involvement of child and family service agencies and despite having a criminal past involving drugs, prostitution and violence.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Love is ... Sharing a kiss

AARON VINCENT ELKAIM/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Taking one last trip before their first baby arrives, Owen and Pauline Doyle share a kiss yesterday in the Distillery District during their visit to Toronto from Ireland. "The buildings here are simply beautiful," Pauline said.

Man faces 10 charges for shooting at police officer

A man who allegedly sprayed an undercover officer with bullets has been arrested and faces 10 charges.

At 2:30 a.m. Monday, a plainclothes officer followed men leaving a Beverly Hills Drive nightclub to a Weston Road shopping centre, where he was shot at, a bullet lodging in his car, police said.

Jaime Eduardo Merchan, 21, is charged with attempted murder and firearms offences. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Have your say with cop survey

If you've had your bike stolen, now you can have your say.

After recovering nearly 3,000 stolen bicycles recently, police are petitioning victims through their "Have Your Say" online survey.

"This survey is to raise awareness of simple steps that people can take, like registering their bikes to protect them," said police spokesperson Mark Pugash.

The police website launched "Have Your Say" a year ago to obtain input on issues of the day. A new set of questions is posted every three weeks.

The previous survey also addressed bike owners, in that case posing safety questions (58 per cent of respondents, for example, said they "always" obey traffic signs).

The new survey is prompted by the recovery of huge caches of bikes and the charging of bike shop owner Igor Kenk.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

More rain leads to high-water warning
A high-water warning was issued last night after up to 20 millimetres of rain fell in areas of the city. It's the GTA's rainiest summer with 303.4 mm of rain in June and July. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Words are woman's weapon

A spoken-word poet who refers to her voice as "my weapon" is to perform at this weekend's MuslimFest for young people.

Sofia Baig, a rising star among Canadian Muslim activists, takes the stage Sunday at a two-day gathering intended to celebrate Islamic cultural expression.

"So pardon me while I rip the clip from my lips and throw — blow them away like ashes," the 20-year-old Montreal poet recites in My Weapon, from her debut CD Daughter of the Sand to be launched at the festival.

"My mouth won't ever cease fire," she raps. "So load the clip and watch as they shoot out of my lips, rain hell on all of them. I want these words to explode and hit."

> **"Use your voice as a means to change the world in a positive manner."**
> Sofia Baig

Her message, she said in a telephone interview, is one of peace.

"(The poem) is telling people: Instead of picking up your gun, instead of taking your bombs and instead of shooting people, and killing people, and raping people, use your voice as a means to change the world in a positive manner," she said last week. "I'm not trying to propagate violence in any way at all."

The fifth annual MuslimFest, at Mississauga's Living Arts Centre, is a youth- and child-oriented event organized by the Mississauga branch of SoundVision, a Chicago religious book and music company. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local men help those in need in Afghanistan

Inayat Habib, who works as a parking enforcement officer at the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus, volunteered with real estate agent Zakaria Khan to go to Afghanistan in March and distribute $38,000 to more than 1,000 families.

With volunteers, they walked in some of the most inaccessible areas in Herat, handing over $35 to the poorest of the poor families.

Herat, with its long history of arts, poetry, and architecture is called the "intellectual capital" of Afghanistan, and although relatively stable, there have been battles between the government and tribal militia.

When the new academic session starts at U of T this fall, Habib said he plans to initiate another fundraising campaign. Once he has collected enough money, he said he will be back in Herat. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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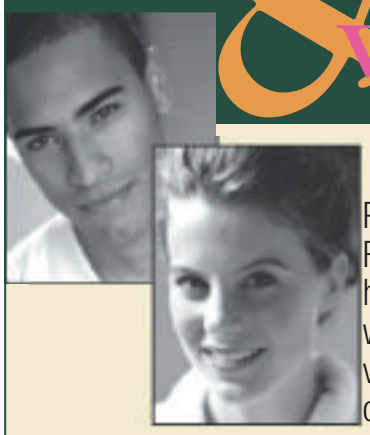
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Man recovering after assault in Owen Sound

A 42-year-old Toronto man who was beaten and stabbed last week by a group of men in Owen Sound is recovering in hospital and is expected to be released this week. Meanwhile, three of four suspects accused in the brutal attack appeared in court yesterday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

$100M for Banff road

With a steady stream of cars lining up to enter Banff National Park as a backdrop, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced yesterday that his government will spend $100 million to twin a treacherous stretch of the mountain highway. Harper said improving the 14-kilometre stretch of the Trans-Canada will bolster a key trade corridor between Alberta and British Columbia and make travelling more safe and efficient. THE CANADIAN PRESS

$45 million pledged for AIDS battle

HEALTH Federal Health Minister Tony Clement says Canada will spend $45 million toward fighting the spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa. Clement made the announcement at the 17th International AIDS Conference in Mexico City Monday.

In a statement, Clement says the funds will build on the $515 million that Canada has contributed to the international fight against AIDS over the past three years. He says the latest investment will provide treatment options for those infected with the virus and educate those who are at risk of infection.

The statement says the funds are earmarked primarily for projects in South Africa and Mozambique. THE CANADIAN PRESS

'Please kill me:' Accused

Court hears gruesome details of beheading

JEFF CUMMINGS
for Metro Canada

A man accused of violently stabbing and beheading a 22-year-old Greyhound bus passenger was found with several severed body parts — including an ear, nose and a partial mouth — inside a plastic bag he was carrying, reports the Winnipeg Free Press.

Vince Weiguang Li, a 40-year-old Edmonton resident who is charged with second-degree murder in Tim McLean's death, was also ordered in court to undergo a psychiatric evaluation.

Court heard that Li allegedly taunted police with McLean's severed head and, at one point, the man appeared to cut off and then eat other body parts, the newspaper reported.

During court, Li also reportedly spoke, "please kill me" softly within earshot of court officials during his appearance. It's believed the man is currently on suicide watch inside the Winnipeg Remand Centre.

The judge hearing the case didn't acknowledge Li's comments in court, reports the CBC.

Pulling ad

•Greyhound Canada is pulling an ad campaign in wake of the violent stabbing and beheading. The 2007 campaign features a slogan that reads, "There's a reason you've never heard of bus rage."

JOHN WOODS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vince Weiguang Li, the accused in the Greyhound bus beheading of Tim McLean last week, appears in a Portage La Prairie court yesterday.

Ontario

Rare elephant born in safari park

ANIMAL A rare Asian elephant born this summer at a safari park in Cambridge is the first third-generation calf born in North America, officials said Monday. The 107-kilogram male was born July 15 to an 11-year-old female named Mali, said Chuck Doyle, director of a New York state zoo that lent the calf's mother to African Lion Safari. Mali and her mother, Targa, have been on loan to the facility since 2006. THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

OIL Premier Danny Williams of Newfoundland and Labrador says a deal on the Hebron oil development won't come as quickly as he thought, but he is still confident a final agreement will be reached soon. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Night of Bliss with Pastor Chris ... 2 Days Away

There is a fresh move of the Spirit of God in the nation of Canada as never experienced before. It's a special time set apart by God's Spirit to bless, heal, restore, promote and alter the course of this nation and the people. The man of God, Pastor Chris has been sent by God to spearhead this timely visitation of the Spirit. From the Bible, it is evident that each time God desired to bring healing, restoration, salvation or a specific word to a people or a nation, He sent a man. He sent Moses when he needed to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. When He wanted to save the world from sin, he sent His Son.

God has not changed; and that's why He has sent Pastor Chris at such a time as this. Night of Bliss is being organized for a specific purpose. You can't afford to miss this event. Everyone who attends would leave changed by God. Be prepare the countdown is on…

My Expectation for the Night of Bliss

My Time of Change: I am attending Night of Bliss because I know its my time for a change. Pastor Chris thought about the Times and I believe that this is my season. I have invited a lot of people & I know that God will know their heart desires & will definitely meet us at our point of need. – Paul

I Expect Miracles: Miracle, Miracles! This is all I expect at the Night of Bliss. It is a day God is going to reveal himself through the man of God Pastor Chris, many will be healed, the weak will be made strong. All men will see the glory & power of God as Pastor Chris shares the word. - Chevaunne

How to prepare & attend the Night of Bliss

Write down your expectations: Pastor Chris always says, "The future belongs to those who prepare for it".
Free Seat Reservation: Ensure you reserve a seat online or by phone for yourself and your loved ones prior to August 8th, otherwise come early. **Admission is Free**
Duration: The Night of Bliss is an all night program that promises to be a worthwhile experience.
Free Shuttle & Free parking: Free bus shuttles have been made available from Square One in Mississauga to the Hershey Centre. Contact a Christ Embassy Church near you for other bus shuttle informations. Parking is free at the NOB.
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Ottawa cab cams effective: Cops
Despite some dissent from taxi drivers, Ottawa police say that security cameras installed in cabs are beginning to do their jobs. Police for the first time used a cab cam to download images of a suspect after a driver was robbed last week. METRO CANADA

'All I did was sing'

MacNeil wonders why RCMP kept eye on her

DEAN LISK
for Metro Canada

The RCMP may have thought of her as someone to be watched, but Rita MacNeil didn't think of herself as a threat.

It was revealed yesterday the singer from Big Pond, Cape Breton, was among the women the force kept an eye on while monitoring feminist rallies and the women's movement in the 1970s.

Rita MacNeil

"It's strange. All I did was sing my songs. That was it. That was my part," MacNeil said. "I am sure if I was under surveillance it had to be all of us under surveillance. I can only say I don't know why."

The Juno winner found out only recently the Mounties had compiled information on her time spent with the Toronto Women's Caucus.

MacNeil said she got involved after being reluctantly brought to a meeting by a friend. The more she learned, the more interested she became — and eventually began writing songs about the movement.

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Alberta **Living with Lyme disease**

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mitch Thibodeau, of Calgary, who has had Lyme disease symptoms since the spring of 2000, relaxes on his parent's ranch with Cocomo near Springbank, Alta. Patient advocacy groups contend the debilitating disease is on its way to reaching epidemic proportions in Canada, while the bulk of the medical community raises a skeptical eyebrow to that assertion.

Green plan up for fix

A committee of seemingly competing interests is reworking part of the Harper government's green plan after conflicting complaints from industry and environmentalists.

The panel of environmental groups, industry lobbyists and federal and provincial officials must report to cabinet by mid-September on ways to improve the Tories' air-quality plan.

Its recommendations are likely to be weighed by the party as it prepares to publish regulations on air quality and greenhouse-gas emissions. THE CANADIAN PRESS

French immersion

N.B. premier says he learned lesson

EDUCATION The New Brunswick government admitted it learned important political lessons yesterday as it modified a controversial decision to scrap early immersion in the province's English schools. Premier Shawn Graham and Education Minister Kelly Lamrock announced the return of early French immersion, beginning in Grade 3, after weathering a firestorm of criticism over the decision to axe the Grade 1 immersion program. "No one gives you a manual on how to govern," Graham said as he acknowledged the difficulty of French education issues in Canada's only officially bilingual province. THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

TORIES A House of Commons committee is serving an extraordinary 31 summonses to unwilling witnesses it wants to testify at a probe into the Conservative "in-and-out" advertising scheme. A dozen top Tory officials are among those being summoned to ethics committee hearings that begin next week. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Thank You Premier McGuinty
for protecting Ontario's Boreal Forest

Dear Premier McGuinty: We thank you for your bold and visionary commitment to the world's future in your recent announcement to protect 225,000 square kilometers of Ontario's still intact Boreal Forest. As scientists who have had the opportunity to carry out research and engage with policy makers around the world, it has been rare that we have been witness to conservation actions of truly historic proportions. Canadians, and really all citizens of the world, should recognize that your pledge is such an action.

It is difficult to find political leaders who will heed the recommendations of science, especially when it is not easy to do so. We are among more than 1,500 scientists from around the world who last year sent a letter to Canadian government leaders pointing out the global importance of the Boreal as one of the last large

© Garth Lenz

undeveloped and wild forest ecosystems left on earth. To maintain its abundance of caribou, wolves, bears and billions of birds, its function as a global warming buffer for the world, and its ability to sustain the many First Nations that make their lives within it, we should strive to protect at least 50% of the Boreal from habitat loss and degradation. Premier McGuinty, you were the first provincial minister in Canada to acknowledge this fact and move it from recommendation to implementation.

We hope that leaders from around the world will follow your lead in increasing the amount of protected areas in their regions. We particularly hope that other Canadian provinces will accept Ontario's challenge to raise the conservation bar. We look forward to seeing the results of this commitment in Ontario and throughout Canada over the next decade.

Sincerely,

Pascal Badiou, Ph.D.
Ducks Unlimited Canada and University of Manitoba

John Jacobs, Ph.D.
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Jeremy Kerr, Ph.D.
University of Ottawa

Micheline Manseau, Ph.D.
University of Manitoba

Stuart Pimm, Ph.D.
Duke University

Peter Raven, Ph.D.
Washington University in St. Louis and Missouri Botanical Garden

Terry Root, Ph.D.
Stanford University

Nigel Roulet , Ph.D.
McGill School of Environment

James Schaeffer, Ph.D.
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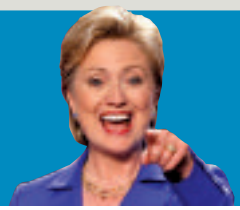
Iraq report denied

The White House and the CIA adamantly denied a report yesterday that the Bush administration forged a letter purporting to show a link between Saddam Hussein's regime and al Qaeda as a justification for the Iraq war. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World



Backing Obama

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, left, plans to campaign for Barack Obama in Nevada and Florida this month. The events are expected to be her first solo campaign appearances on Obama's behalf since she lost the Democratic nomination contest. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

China says calm restored

Blood was washed off the road. Debris was cleared away. And authorities said peace had been restored yesterday in China's restive Muslim region where 16 police were killed in an attack that may have been timed to overshadow Olympic celebrations.

But there were plenty of other signs suggesting all was not well in Kashgar, this ancient Silk Road city near the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan at the opposite end of China from Beijing.

Townspeople were reluctant to talk about Monday's brazen assault. Police stepped up security checks and put schools, hospitals and government offices on heightened alert, state-run media and locals said. Slogans on billboards, walls and buildings urged people to create a more secure and harmonious society.

The precautions underscored the Chinese government's sensitivity to anything that could sour its plans for the Beijing Games to be a pivotal moment of national glory and global acceptance, despite continuing criticism of its record on human rights.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Aftershock

- A strong aftershock struck a western Chinese region where a May earthquake killed almost 70,000 people, shaking buildings a few hours after the Olympic torch relay passed through the area yesterday. The quake killed one person and injured 23 others, local media reported.

Edouard **Riding out the storm**

DONNA MCWILLIAM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Greg Trevino rides the waves yesterday in Galveston, Texas. Tropical storm Edouard hit the Texas Gulf coast east of Galveston yesterday with strong winds and heavy rain, but even though forecasters had feared it could become a hurricane and both Texas and Louisiana had made emergency preparations, winds never reached hurricane strength of 119 km/h. No major damage was reported.

News in brief

CONSPIRACY John (Junior) Gotti has been indicted on conspiracy charges in Florida, linking him to large-scale cocaine trafficking and the slayings of three New York men in the late 1980s and early 1990s, federal officials said yesterday. Gotti — the son of the late Gambino family crime boss John Gotti — was arrested at his Long Island, N.Y., home.

CLONING Bernann McKinney, an American woman, received five puppies yesterday that were cloned from her beloved late pitbull, becoming the inaugural customer of a South Korean company that says it is the world's first successful commercial canine cloning service.

POLITICS Among young people, Barack Obama appears to be beating John McCain in the battle for "cool." According to some members of Generation Y, Obama, 47, has the "cool" thing down. He's an avid basketball player, listens to Jay-Z on his iPod and was on the cover of this month's issue of Rolling Stone magazine.

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Crude oil prices continue downward trend
Oil prices sank as low as $118 US a barrel at one point yesterday on the growing belief that a U.S. economic slowdown and high energy costs are curbing consumer demand for gasoline and petroleum products. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Founder of fuel-cell firm Ballard dies

OBITUARY Geoff Ballard, founder of fuel-cell firm Ballard Power Systems Inc. and an entrepreneur Time Magazine once named one of its "Heroes for the Planet," has died.

A company official confirmed Ballard died Saturday at age 76. The cause of death was not disclosed.

Ballard has been called the "father of the fuel-cell industry" for his work, including the introduction in 1993 of the world's first hydrogen-fuel-cell-powered transit bus.

Ballard was born and raised in Niagara Falls, Ont., and studied geological engineering at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont.

He founded Ballard Research Inc. in 1979.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Glamour at the Bay

HBC appoints veteran Brooks to head chain

The new head of Canada's oldest department store chain, Bonnie Brooks, will bring a sense of fashion, style and glamour to the job, observers say.

With 30 years' fashion industry experience, including stints at Holt Renfrew, the now defunct women's specialty chain Dylex, and Flare magazine, Brooks completes a powerful triumvirate under HBC's new owners.

Brooks

"She will bring a level of class or style that may not have been at the Bay before," said Toronto-based retail consultant Len Kubas.

Brooks leaves a huge job in Asia where she was president of Lane Crawford Joyce Group, a 500-store luxury fashion retailer referred to as "the Harrods of Hong Kong."

Brooks has indicated one of her main tasks would be attracting more prestige brands to the Bay.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Sony gets control of joint venture

DEAL Bertelsmann AG will sell its 50 per cent stake in music business Sony BMG to Sony Corp. in a $1.2-billion US deal, giving the Japanese firm ownership of the joint venture whose roster of artists include Alicia Keys and Leona Lewis. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CanWest Global going private?

REPORT Shares in CanWest Global Communications jumped nearly 14 per cent yesterday following a report suggesting CEO Leonard Asper was exploring a range of options, including taking the company private.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

U.S. Fed leaves rate unchanged

RATES The U.S. Federal Reserve, confronted with a slumping economy and rising inflation, has decided for a second straight meeting to leave interest rates unchanged at 2 per cent. The prime lending rate stays at 5 per cent.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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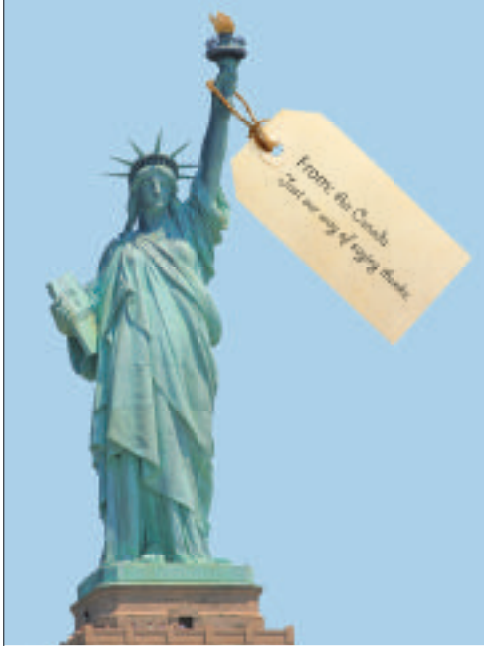

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Doping
India's only weightlifting entry for the Beijing Games, Monica Devi, was stopped from boarding a flight to China yesterday after testing positive for a banned substance. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing Games

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Ankle injury could fell O'Neill

GYMNASTICS Canadian Brandon O'Neill's status for the Olympic gymnastics competition is up in the air after he injured an ankle this week. The Edmonton native was doing a tumbling pass on Monday when he got hurt.

It's not clear if the 24-year-old will be able to compete in the Olympic meet, which begins Saturday with men's qualifying.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tomorrow's lineup

END IN SIGHT? Canada's track and field team has been shut out from medalling since 1996, but the drought could end this month. Read tomorrow's Metro for more.

2 days remain until the official start of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing.

High hopes for kayaker

Van Koeverden expected to medal in K-1 500, 1,000

MARTY YORK
marty.york@metronews.ca

If you'd like to see Canada capture a gold medal in Beijing, you ought to focus your attention on Adam van Koeverden.

He's a kayaker from Oakville. And he's easily your best bet.

"The guy is definitely the stud of the Canadian Olympic team," says The Toronto Star's Olympic expert, Randy Starkman. "No one's got a track record like him going into the Games — Olympic champion, world champion, winner of five of six World Cups this season, newly-minted record holder ... He's a favourite for the podium in both the K-1 500 and 1,000 metres."

Van Koeverden was also named Canada's flag-bearer for the opening ceremonies in Beijing.

And unlike past flag-bearing athletes, van Koeverden isn't bristling or suggesting carrying his country's colours could be detrimental to his success.

"It's a great honour," he said. "I just hope I don't let anybody down."

He hasn't done much letting down in recent years. He won the gold medal in the men's K-1 500 metres at the 2004 Olympics in Athens. And he believes that, at 26, he's in even better physical condition now. And he also thinks he knows what to expect from his competition.

He's won five of six World Cup races this summer — he won a bronze in the other — and all the events had him competing against the world's top kayakers. He raised his career total to 21 victories. He's never been beaten in the 500-metre competition.

"That means people will be formulating their racing and training plans in an effort to beat me," van Koeverden says, "but I'm cool with that. I think it's wonderful to be that guy."

STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Kayaker Adam van Koeverden, 26, was recently named as Canada's flag-bearer.

On the web

- For more on Adam van Koeverden, check out his website at vankayak.com.

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Haren signs four-year extension with Arizona
Arizona Diamondbacks all-star right-hander Dan Haren has agreed to terms on a four-year, $44.75-million US contract that runs through the 2012 season with a club option for 2013. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports

Ronaldo not leaving: Ferguson

Cristiano Ronaldo, left, is certain to play for Manchester United this season, according to manager Sir Alex Ferguson. Ronaldo has been linked with a move to Real Madrid since the end of last season — when he scored 42 goals to lead United to the Champions League and Premier League titles — but Ferguson said yesterday that Madrid's public courtship of the Portugal international was in vein.

EDITOR: JONATHAN P. KUEHLEIN, SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

Packers ready to move forward without Favre

NFL The bond between Brett Favre and the Green Bay Packers appears to be broken beyond repair.

Packers coach Mike McCarthy said last night that after approximately six hours of what he called "brutally honest" conversations with Favre over the past two days, the three-time MVP just isn't in the right mindset to be part of the team.

Favre

Even with the chance to win his starting job back potentially on the table, McCarthy said Favre couldn't seem to get past emotional wounds that were opened as tensions mounted in recent weeks.

"The football team's moving forward," McCarthy said. "The train has left the station, whatever analogy you want. He needs to jump on the train and let's go. Or, if we can't get past things that have happened, I have to keep the train moving."

McCarthy said he and Favre made plans to speak later last night, but McCarthy didn't seem to allow for the possibility that anything significant would change.

A trade could be coming next, with Tampa Bay re-emerging as a potential destination after seemingly being eliminated from consideration in recent weeks. McCarthy wouldn't address trade talks, but did say a quick resolution to the situation is important to the rest of his players.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jays rally late to top A's

Mench hits walkoff single to complete Toronto comeback

BLUE JAYS 4 ATHLETICS 3

It was déjà vu for B.C.'s Scott Richmond in his second major league start.

Once again, the Blue Jays rookie starter allowed three runs in just under six innings of work. Once more, he dribbled out hits, but didn't concede any big innings. Once again, he got a standing ovation from the crowd as he left.

It wasn't to be a first major league win though. When he left, the Jays trailed by one. But a stirring ninth-inning rally by the Toronto offence at least spared Richmond the loss.

Entering the final frame, the Jays had managed only four hits against the Oakland staff.

Alex Rios kicked things off with a leadoff single. With one out, Rod Barajas' double to the wall in left-centre tied the game at 3-3. Adam Lind was intentionally walked by Oakland closer Huston Street. Scott Rolen's soft groundout advanced the runners to second and third.

That left the heroics to Kevin Mench. The burly fringe player knocked Street's first pitch into left field, scoring pinch-runner Brad Wilkerson to give Toronto a 4-3 walkoff win.

Mench got the plaudits, but the game was saved in the top of the eighth. In that frame, shortstop John McDonald robbed Oakland of vital insurance runs on what may have been the best defensive play by a Jay this year.

With the bases loaded and none out, Mark Ellis hit a soft, sinking liner that should have dribbled into left for a two-run single. McDonald covered acres of ground, leapt at full extension, snared the ball and swivelled. His throw caught a disbelieving Emil Brown standing slack-jawed 20 feet off second.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto Blue Jays shortstop John McDonald makes a diving throw to complete a double play during the eighth inning against the Oakland A's last night. The Jays came back in the ninth to win 4-3.

Sports in brief

NFL Denver Broncos wide receiver Brandon Marshall was suspended for three games by the NFL for violating the league's personal conduct policy. Marshall was arrested on March 6 on a domestic violence warrant filed by his former girlfriend in Atlanta.

MLB New York Yankees pitcher Joba Chamberlain will be examined by noted orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Andrews today after undergoing an MRI on his ailing right shoulder.

MLB Billy Wagner was placed on the 15-day disabled list yesterday with a strained left forearm, leaving the New York Mets without their all-star closer as they chase a playoff spot.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

SCOREBOARD

MLB

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
AMERICAN LEAGUE
TORONTO 4 Oakland 3
Cleveland at Tampa Bay
N.Y. Yankees at Texas
Boston at Kansas City
Detroit at Chicago White Sox
Baltimore at L.A. Angels
Minnesota at Seattle
NATIONAL LEAGUE
Chicago Cubs 11 Houston 7
Florida at Philadelphia
San Diego at N.Y. Mets
Milwaukee at Cincinnati
L.A. Dodgers at St. Louis
Washington at Colorado
Pittsburgh at Arizona
Atlanta at San Francisco

TODAY'S GAMES
AMERICAN LEAGUE
Cleveland at Tampa Bay, 12:40
Baltimore at L.A. Angels, 3:35
Minnesota at Seattle, 4:40
Oakland at **TORONTO**, 7:07
N.Y. Yankees at Texas, 8:05
Boston at Kansas City, 8:10
Detroit at Chicago White Sox, 8:11
NATIONAL LEAGUE
Milwaukee at Cincinnati, 12:35
Houston at Chicago Cubs, 2:20
Pittsburgh at Arizona, 3:40
Atlanta at San Francisco, 3:45
Florida at Philadelphia, 7:05
San Diego at N.Y. Mets, 7:10
L.A. Dodgers at St. Louis, 8:15
Washington at Colorado, 9:05

CFL

EAST DIVISION

	W	L	T	PTS
Montreal	3	3	0	6
TORONTO	3	3	0	6
Winnipeg	1	5	0	2
Hamilton	1	5	0	2

WEST DIVISION

	W	L	T	PTS
Saskatchewan	6	0	0	12
Edmonton	4	2	0	8
Calgary	3	3	0	6
B.C.	3	3	0	6

WEEK 7
TOMORROW'S GAMES
TORONTO at Hamilton, 7
Calgary at Saskatchewan, 10
FRIDAY'S GAMES
Montreal at Winnipeg, 7:30
Edmonton at B.C., 10:30

SOCCER

GAMES FEATURING TORONTO FC:
SUNDAY'S GAME
TORONTO at Colorado, 4

LOTTERIES

Ontario Pick 3	7 0 2
Ontario Pick 4	7 3 1 1
Encore	9236720
Daily Keno	4, 5, 20, 22, 24, 25, 33, 34, 36, 40, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 56, 57, 59, 60, 67. Results not official

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Edu the cover model

Toronto FC midfielder Maurice Edu will be on the cover of EA Sports' FIFA Soccer 09, the video game company announced yesterday. Brazilian star Ronaldinho and Mexican goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa are also on the cover with Edu. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jays wisely turned down Bay deal

YorkReport

These would have been Bay Days for the Blue Jays had the club's decision-makers been willing to relinquish their top two prospects last week.

Front-office sources with the Pittsburgh Pirates told Metro yesterday that, before MLB's July 31 trade deadline, they made a two-for-one proposal in which they would have dealt Canadian all-star Jason Bay to Toronto for minor leaguers Travis Snider and Brett Cecil.

The Jays mulled it over and declined. Snider is a power-hitting outfielder/first baseman. Cecil is a left-handed pitcher. Baseball America ranks the two as the Jays' most promising minor leaguers.

Bay, a B.C. native, wound up in the Boston Red Sox outfield as part of a three-way deal that sent the Pirates prospects and the Los Angeles Dodgers all-star outfielder Manny Ramirez.

Bay has excelled with Boston so far. He entered last night with six runs and a .315 average in 16 at-bats.

• Not that Ramirez has been slouching in L.A. He entered last night with a .615 average and five runs batted in after 13 at-bats. And I'm sensing an all-L.A. World Series in October — the Dodgers and the Angels.

• The Stampeders and their fans are still fuming about their one-point loss to the Roughriders in Calgary Saturday night, partly because the officials mistakenly ejected linebacker JoJuan Armour after the game's second defensive snap and partly because some Saskatchewan fans in attendance refused to abide by the moment of silence devoted to ex-CFLer Leif Pettersen.

But it's the undefeated Riders who have filed an official complaint against Calgary, demanding league executives review what they considered an illegal horse-collar tackle by the Stamps' Brandon Browner on the Riders' Carl Berman.

Should be an interesting rematch in Regina tomorrow, with Armour vowing that Rider running back Wes Cates won't come close to the 139 yards he gained last week.

• The Beijing Olympics will enable a Canadian website to become the world's first social networking company to make measurable income for sponsors.

"Online companies have long been trying to prove to sponsors that they can make money," said Shawn Saraga, president of www.freemyteam.com, the all-sports version of Facebook, "but we'll actually be proving it once and for all, without doubt."

The lowdown: Users can sign on at freemyteam.com, enter a code and collect $10 off at a Shoeless Joe's restaurant.

"Watch the Olympics there and cheer on our athletes," Saraga said. "It's a win-win. Shoeless Joe's makes money and our users save money."

Marty York has been a groundbreaking sports columnist and broadcaster in Canada for decades.

Ramirez jerseys fly off the shelves

•Fans at Dodger Stadium purchased more than $125,000 worth of Manny Ramirez swag in the slugger's first two games with Los Angeles. Ramirez was traded from the Boston Red Sox, where he became unpopular, as part of a three-way deal last week.

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LET'S GO TO THE EX

Automotive

A METRO JOINT VENTURE WITH: carguide magazine.com

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

Acura sticks to roots

TSX adds more appeal without losing its athletic tradition

BILL MCLAUCHLAN
for Metro Canada

The 2009 Acura TSX

While the 2009 version of Acura's TSX offers a lot more room, comfort, features and technology than before, it has managed to stay true to its predecessor's image of a light, nimble and athletic sport sedan.

The design looks more evolutionary than revolutionary. A wider, bolder stance certainly gives it a sportier flavour but it also sits on a longer 2705 mm wheelbase (a 35 mm stretch over the outgoing model).

Overall, its body is slightly longer than before and wider too — all of which translates into a generous driver-oriented interior with more hip room and shoulder space.

The new look is dominated up front by a chiseled 'signature' grille, sharp elongated headlamps and bold fender flares.

The overall shape is clean and crisp, with strong character lines helping to shape the side surfaces.

But what is really seen in the new look is a clue to Acura's future styling direction for its sedans.

A lighter, stiffer body, coupled with revisions to the front and rear suspension, brings a noticeable increase in agility, along with a flatter, more controlled ride, improved high-speed stability and reduced road noise.

The 201 horsepower, 2.4-litre four-cylinder engine brings improved performance. Though the power output is actually down a tad from the '08 model, its useable power comes across a much wider rpm range, while a titch more torque further strengthens pulling power at middle rpm levels.

This allows more response off the line and out of corners while maintaining its strength in the rpm range where the engine operates most of the time.

Two transmissions are available: a standard six-speed manual with revised ratios for better performance and an available five-speed automatic with a new lock-up torque converter assembly, steering wheel-mounted F1-style paddle shifters, and intelligent features such as Grade Logic Control and Shift Hold Control, which makes driving on hilly or winding roads more enjoyable.

The manual is more fun, naturally, but the automatic is well suited to the engine's traits too.

A thicker steering wheel rim with fingertip buttons for Bluetooth and voice activation controls is a new feature in the sophisticated and well-finished interior.

Standard features on the $34,200 base model include a sunroof, seven-speaker sound system, dual-zone climate control, power (heated) eight-way driver and four-way front passenger seats.

Moving up a notch, a mid-range $36,200 (with manual) Premium Package adds leather seats, XM Radio, automatic headlight, two-position memory driver seat and digital media auxiliary USB jack with iPod/iPhone compatibility. HID headlamps and fog lights improve functionality and add style.

For those with top-end tastes, the $39,000 TSX Technology Package adds a 10-speaker surround sound system with DVD-audio and also includes a satellite nav system with bilingual voice recognition and a rearview back-up camera.

There's no doubt the new TSX comes with lots of added appeal — enough to satisfy its loyal followers and tempt those who before might not have considered it.

2009 Acura TSX

Type: Mid-size 5-pass. sedan FWD
Price: $34,200 - $39,000
Engine: 2.4L L4 DOHC
HP: 201 @ 7,000 rpm
Torque: 172 @ 4,400 rpm

Highlights

- Ride smoothness and quietness
- Interior comfort
- Handling agility
- Sharp-edged athletic styling

A thicker steering wheel rim with fingertip buttons for Bluetooth and voice activation controls is a new feature in the sophisticated and well-finished interior.

Driving around bikes

Rising fuel costs have encouraged soaring cycle use — so we are seeing bicyclists on the roads with many different levels of experience.

This can be a problem for drivers; we need to take extra care to judge their speed — as well as the road and weather conditions — from the new biker's point of view.

Remember too that some bike riders, particularly younger ones, have never driven a car, and so don't recognize the problems that they can cause car drivers. In an accident involving a car and a cyclist, whoever is to blame the cyclist will always be the more vulnerable to a serious injury.

Sharing the road

To help prevent potential conflict here are a few pointers to bear in mind:

- Bike riders don't have steel armour round them like drivers do. Passing them at speed within a foot of their elbow may feel perfectly safe from where you are, but it is very disconcerting when you are the cyclist.
- In traffic, make sure you don't cut off a biker who is about to pass you on the inside. Don't try to cut across a cyclist when you need to turn right at an intersection. Wait behind the cyclist until he/she has either turned right or passed the cross street.
- Park with care and don't open any door until you're sure there is no cyclist coming up on either side.

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Sonata hits right note

Popular ride retuned

MARK ATKINSON
for Metro Canada

Hyundai has made plenty of changes to its mid-size 2009 Sonata, making its popular ride more attractive for consumers.

Hyundai has made plenty of changes to its mid-size 2009 Sonata, aimed at making its bread-and-butter sedan an easier choice in a very challenging market segment.

Responding to complaints from some quarters about an overly plasticky interior, ride quality, steering feel and seat comfort, Hyundai's mid-cycle revamp for 2009 tackles these issues head on.

The biggest changes can be seen inside with the use of improved materials with soft-touch plastics and (in Limited models) wood trim to liven up the atmosphere. The gauge layout remains the same, but now uses blue backlighting for improved readability.

Larger, re-profiled front seats also provide better support for the daily commute. Otherwise, the interior remains the largest in this segment, despite the latest Honda Accord and Toyota Camry getting larger with their recent re-designs.

External changes consist mainly of mild cosmetic changes to the headlamps, grille and front bumper.

Under the skin, some suspension tweaks and quicker steering response make the Sonata more fun to drive while firming up ride comfort.

Engine choices stay the same for '09 but both have been retuned for more power and better fuel economy. The 2.4-litre four-cylinder now produces 175 horsepower while the 3.3-litre V6 brings a strong 249 hp to the party. Fuel efficiency improvements see the 2.4-litre unit delivering 8.02 L/100 km in the combined cycle with the V6 at a competitive 9.05 L/100 km.

The four-cylinder engine benefits from a new five-speed automatic transmission in place of the old four-speed box and is also available with a five-speed manual in the base GL trim. The V6 is exclusively paired with a five-speed manumatic in all trim levels.

Inside, Hyundai offers more standard equipment than ever, including heated seats and steering wheel-mounted audio controls.

Safety hasn't been ignored either as the Sonata comes standard with ABS and electronic brake-force distribution, along with six airbags. Brake assist is available on higher-end models.

True to its roots, Hyundai offers even more standard equipment than ever, including heated seats and steering wheel-mounted audio controls on every model.

The base four-cylinder GL starts at $21,995 with a manual transmission and moves to $23,395 when the automatic is added. With either you get a leather-wrapped steering wheel and shift knob, power windows, locks and heated mirrors, keyless entry, alarm system, cruise control, AM/FM/XM/CD/MP3 audio system with six speakers, telescopic steering wheel, driver's seat lumbar support and more.

The $27,795 V6 GL adds alloy wheels, fog lights and a power driver's seat. Electronic stability and traction control are also included on this model.

2009 Hyundai Sonata

Type: Mid-size 5-pass. sedan FWD
Price: $21,995 - $31,495
Engine: 2.4L L4 DOHC/3.3L V6 DOHC
HP: 175 @ 6,000 rpm/249 @ 6,000 rpm
Torque: 168 @ 4,000 rpm/229 @ 4,500 rpm

Highlights

- Improved interior
- Better seating
- More power
- Increased fuel efficiency
- Value for money

Ford Focus

Focus most improved, study says

Amid all the current auto industry gloom, a ray of sunshine has emerged for the Ford Motor Co.

Its Focus is the most improved vehicle in the industry's top study measuring customer-pleasing design, content, and vehicle performance.

In J.D. Power and Associates 2008 Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study, the Focus raised its score over last year by 88 index points — the biggest improvement in the industry.

The compact Focus performed better than the segment average in every category, scoring especially well in the areas of fuel economy, audio/entertainment/navigation, interior styling and exterior styling.

Its appeal to buyers bears out in the marketplace: Focus retail sales in the U.S. are up 64 per cent year-to-date (five per cent in Canada) while industry-wide retail sales of small cars are up 10 per cent.

In response, Ford is increasing Focus production at its assembly plant in Wayne, Mich., where a third shift will be added to the plant's body and paint shops in September.

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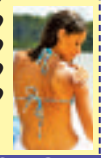

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Make the best of rental cars

Know safety rules and regulations when travelling around Europe and other countries

Do you have a rental car horror story? If you're planning to drive a rental car in Europe or elsewhere this travel season, it's worth spending a few minutes planning to avoid the most obvious pitfalls.

Standards of road safety in some European countries make Canada look like a relatively safe haven — and that is partially down to the maintenance and condition of the cars on the road.

If you rent a car on holiday, make sure you inspect for damage before you sign for it. Are the tires OK? Does it have adequate oil and water? Likewise, at the end of the rental period, make sure the car company checks and signs it "clear" for you.

Spend a minute or so familiarizing yourself with the layout: It's a strange car and, if you're planning to drive in the U.K., everything may be the wrong way around for starters.

Make sure you are comfortable with the brakes and steering: Don't feel pressured to throw your bags in the trunk and be on the road in 30 seconds.

Find the knobs and buttons and make sure they are working. And pop the trunk lid to check that the spare tire is where it should be.

Find out what to do if you break down, get a puncture or discover a fault while driving. Is there an emergency breakdown service you can call provided with the car?

Before you set off, remember to check the rules about returning it with a full or empty fuel tank. And — yes, it happens on holiday, too — make sure you know if the car is gasoline- or diesel-powered to avoid refuelling problems.

Knowing who to call and what to do if your car breaks down while travelling in EU countries is important for your safety.

Road safety experts have described air conditioning in warm climates as more than a luxury — it's a safety feature if you are driving on holiday.

And is the car the right size for you and your family, plus all your luggage?

If you're planning to do any long journeys, make sure you've booked a car with room for everyone without them being cramped.

It can help reduce tension and stress for everyone, which in turn makes for a safer journey.

Finally, before you set off, check what rules and regulations apply and any items that are needed in the country you are going to.

For example, in EU countries every car now is required by law to carry a high-visibility safety vest to make motorists more obvious during roadside stops for repairs or emergencies.

Mexico flexes sports car muscle

Bristling with design flair, the Mastretta MXT is an exciting new sports car that's sure to put Mexico on the map.

The lightweight two-seater, which spiced up the recent British International Motor Show, weighs just 900 kg. And with top speed of 241 km/h (150 mph), it is aimed at thrill seekers who also have an eye to the environment, who want to have fun and enjoy driving without causing damage through their car's excessive weight and power.

The two-seat, rear-drive MXT coupe, the first car to be designed and built in Mexico, has a 240-horsepower 2.0-litre turbocharged Duratec engine, pushing it to 100 km/h (just more than 60 mph) in less than five seconds.

Its bonded aluminum chassis features aircraft style technology. Closed mould techniques sculpt the distinctive body from high quality fibreglass and the air conditioned interior is leather-trimmed.

Race car feel comes through quick rack and pinion steering and ventilated disc brakes with ABS slow the car with eye-popping power, when necessary.

National pride as well as burning ambition for their new car motivates the Mastretta brothers, who have taken the car from idea through concept to reality.

"We needed to create a great car because Mexico has no tradition of sophisticated sports car manufacturing," says designer Daniel Mastretta. "It is most important that our customers are delighted by the new MXT. That's what we aimed to do from the first drawing of the car, but we also want to make our country proud of the MXT and to show the world what we can do."

The Mastretta MXT

This year's models, last year's prices

Mercedes-Benz Canada says pricing will remain virtually identical to 2008 for its facelifted '09 B-Class and the C-Class, two of the most affordable models in the automaker's range.

The pricing remains static despite a new design for the B-Class and additional standard features for both models.

The B-Class and C-Class already dominate their respective segments, and the refreshed design and additional content will provide even greater value.

Pricing for the 2009 B-Class starts at $29,900 for the B200, and $34,400 for the B200 TURBO. The redesigned B-Class features enhancements including an updated front end design, new rear bumper and revised tail lights, new wheel design and more standard equipment, including a new generation audio and communications system with Bluetooth and in-dash CD Changer.

2009 Mercedes B-Class

The C-Class also features new standard equipment and an optional new dynamic handling package for 2009. The C230 starts from $35,800 with rear wheel drive and $39,500 for the C230 4MATIC.

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[†]The 2008 vehicle's Powertrain components are covered by a limited Powertrain warranty for up to 5 years or 160,000 km, whichever comes first. See Retailer for details and conditions on limited warranty and customer assistance/service features. [^]Coverage for up to 5 years or 160,000 km, whichever comes first. [1]Within the first 30 days or 2,500 km of delivery, whichever comes first. You should know this: [1a]Freight ($1,300) on a 2008 Saturn ASTRA 5-Door XE not included. Air tax ($100) if applicable, taxes, license, insurance, registration, administration fees, fees associated with publication/filing at the movable property registry/PPSA, duties, and optional equipment extra. PDI included. Retailers are free to set individual prices. Retailer order or trade may be necessary. Offers apply as indicated to a new 2008 Saturn ASTRA 5-Door XE and apply to qualified retail and eligible fleet customers in the Ontario Marketing Association Area only. Time-limited offers; subject to change without notice. See your Retailer, visit saturncanada.com or call 1-888-4SATURN for conditions and details. [Δ]Financing on approved GMAC credit only. Down payment, trade or security deposit may be required. Monthly payment and cost of borrowing will vary depending on amount borrowed and down payment/trade. Example for a representative credit agreement: $10,000 at 0.0% APR, the monthly payment is $139 for 72 months. Cost of borrowing is $0. Total obligation is $10,000. Monthly payment of $198 based on purchase price of $17,150 for a 2008 Saturn ASTRA 5-Door XE with $1,900 down payment. Financing offer applies to qualified retail and eligible fleet customers only. [°]Fuel efficiency data was determined using approved EnerGuide ratings. [ε]On approved GMAC credit only. See Retailer for details. [•]Donated vehicles must be licensed and insured for the previous consecutive 6-month period. For eligibility requirements, visit carheaven.ca. [▼]With purchase or lease of virtually all 2008 new or demonstrator models delivered from Retailer stock between June 19, 2008 and September 2, 2008, and with payment of an additional $0.01, customers receive a Preferred Price™ gas savings card, redeemable for $0.20 per litre savings on 2,500 L of motor fuel. The $0.20 savings includes applicable taxes. Cards valid as of 72 hours after delivery. Cards valid only at participating Petro-Canada locations (and other approved North Atlantic Petroleum locations in Newfoundland) and not redeemable for cash. GM reserves the right to amend or terminate these offers and/or the programs for any reason, in whole or in part, at any time without notice. ™Trademark of Petro-Canada. Used under license. OnStar is a trademark of OnStar Corporation. ©2008 Saturn Corporation. Saturn and its logos and vehicle names are trademarks or registered trademarks of Saturn Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

Taste of Newfoundland

Taxi promotes province's tourism while giving Torontonians a ride

A mobile piece of Newfoundland and Labrador is cruising Toronto's streets until August 20 in the form of Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism's "Get Carried Away" vehicle. It's offering free rides inside a cool, air controlled, spacious interior to pedestrians in the downtown core.

Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism "Get Carried Away" taxi will be cruising around Toronto till August 20.

The vehicle in question is a roomy Crown Victoria that looks like a regular taxi on the outside but its interior has been retrofitted to provide quality and comfort — from cool filtered fresh air, down to bottled spring water from Down East. There's also a touch screen TV where passengers can watch eye-catching footage of the province.

The idea is to offer relief from high Toronto temperatures, as well as some friendly Newfoundland and Labrador hospitality as people feeling the brunt of the city's heat and smog travel to where they need to go.

Passengers have the chance to escape to 'The Rock' for a refreshing drive of up to 15 minutes anywhere within the areas of St. Clair Avenue to Lakeshore Boulevard, and Bathurst to Parliament Street.

Melanie Mooney, the cab's friendly and knowledgeable driver with a background in film and theatre, provides answers to any questions about visiting the province as she drives passengers to their destinations.

The Get Carried Away vehicle runs on natural gas, and Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism will purchase carbon offsets to neutralize emissions for every kilometre driven. In partnership with WestJet, passengers will also have a chance to win a trip for two to Newfoundland and Labrador. For more details visit getcarriedaway.ca.

Nissan GT-R supercar finds first owner

SOLD Nissan Canada thrilled a local customer recently by handing over the keys to the first 2009 Nissan GT-R supercar in Canada.

The all-new $81,900 GT-R, long coveted by buyers who previously could experience the legendary car only through electronic video games, was handed over to Stanislaus Gonsalves of Oakville. Alta Nissan dealer principals Edward Wong and Joe Zanchin and Jeff Parent, Vice-President, Sales and Marketing at Nissan Canada Inc., presented Gonsalves with keys to his very own Black Obsidian GT-R at a special reception.

Gonsalves, who has owned numerous Nissans over the years and ordered his GT-R in July 2007, said: "I'm an automotive aficionado and the GT-R truly pushes the boundaries of performance and craftsmanship. I am so excited to finally get the keys and eager to get behind the wheel to experience firsthand what this car can do."

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Duo ready for epic drive

A 104-year-old car that's to be driven nearly 6,400 km (4,000 miles) across America will be making an appearance in Canada on its way to New York.

The 1904 Oldsmobile horseless carriage, currently valued at over $80,000, harks back to the very dawn of motoring, when the car was priced at just $650. Its intrepid owner, Joy Rainey, will follow the route of a similar model Oldsmobile that made the barn-storming coast-to-coast trip back in 1903, when founder Ransom E. Olds successfully proved the durability of his vehicle to the car-hungry American public.

Joy and co-driver Trevor Hulks hope to more than halve the 75 days it took to complete the original journey from San Francisco to New York, but are under no illusions about the toughness of the challenge:

"I love mad adventures!", she quipped, "but it won't be easy. Although much of the route followed by the 1903 driver duo of Lester Whitman and John S. Hammond is no longer loose surface, and we have the luxury of decent mapping and plenty of fuel stations en route, to drive a car of this age such a long distance will still present major challenges.

Joy Rainey and Trevor Hulks plan to retrace a historic journey across North America with a 1904 Oldsmobile.

long journey

- The epic drive is set to leave San Francisco in May 2009, traversing a dozen U.S. states and includes a run through Ontario with a crossing at Niagara Falls on the way to New York City some 35 days later.

"I was amazed at the enormous range of conditions we'll encounter, from 8,500 ft high mountains to blisteringly hot deserts, and tracks running north of the Great Salt Lake that remain much the same as they were in 1903."

The Olds has a 2.0-litre, single cylinder gasoline engine, two forward gears and reverse, pneumatic tires, and relies on rudimentary braking and somewhat imprecise tiller steering.

Joy, better known for her participation in the high speed world of hillclimbing and circuit racing, says that the progress of the Oldsmobile will be anything but sedentary, despite its cruising speed of some 40 km/h (25 mph).

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Technology rules Insignia

New Vauxhall model features many innovations to improve safety

Technology was very much to the fore among the many cars making their debut at the recent British International Motor Show, and none more so than in Vauxhall's new Insignia.

The global debutant, which replaces the Vectra sedan in the U.K. market, features a number of innovations to improve safety.

Particularly notable is its Front Camera System, which helps drivers in two ways. Remarkably, it can read speed limit and no overtaking signs at the side of the road and display them on the dashboard as a reminder to the driver. It also has a lane departure warning system to alert the driver if the car veers out of its running lane, perhaps caused by the driver falling asleep at the wheel.

The new Insignia also claims the most advanced headlights yet. The Adaptive Forward Lighting System offers nine different settings that allows it to adjust to differing road profiles and illuminate dark corners before the car turns into them. Both innovations demonstrate the great advances being made by manufacturers in their efforts to further improve safety on the roads.

Why should this interest you? Well, the next Saturn Aura will come from the Insignia. According to GM product czar Bob Lutz, the cars will share subsystems, suspensions and powertrains, but the Aura will have a different skin and interior when it shows up here as a replacement for the current Aura.

The new Vauxhall Insignia claims the most advanced headlights yet among its many innovative features

Camaro comes to Oshawa

Chevrolet has introduced the production version of the 2010 Camaro being built at GM's Oshawa Car Assembly Plant, the sporty car nameplate it retired in 2002.

Heritage-inspired, the new Camaro will feature advanced technology and surprising fuel efficiency — including 9.0 L/100km estimated highway fuel consumption on the high-volume V6 models. Volume production will commence in February with sales set to begin in the first quarter of 2009.

"The new Camaro delivers the best of both worlds — great heritage and a thoroughly modern, advanced package of sporty driving, comfort and technology," said Marc Comeau, vice-president sales, service and marketing for GM of Canada. "And it does so with styling, fuel economy and value our competitors simply can't match."

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*MSRP of $16,900/$21,975 for 2008 City Jetta / Jetta with manual transmission. Freight and PDI of $1,335, PPSA, license, insurance, registration, dealer charges, options, and applicable taxes are extra. Dealer may sell for less. **First monthly payment free up to a maximum of $250 for the City Jetta and $400 for the Jetta (taxes included – no cash value). $0 security deposit and $0 down payment offered only on new and in stock 2008 City Jetta / Jetta leased through Volkswagen Finance. Monthly payment of $226/$303 for 48 months based on 1.5% lease APR. Freight and PDI of $1,335 included. PPSA, license, insurance, registration, dealer charges, options, and applicable taxes are extra. Limited time lease offer available through Volkswagen Finance on approved credit. MSRP for City Jetta as shown is $20,503 with Siata accessory wheels. MSRP of the Jetta as shown is $23,310. $0.12/km over 80,000 km charged at lease end. At participating Volkswagen dealerships only. Offer ends September 2, 2008 and is subject to change or cancellation without notice. Supplies limited. See dealer for details. "Volkswagen", the Volkswagen logo, and "Jetta" are registered trademarks of Volkswagen AG. © 2008 Volkswagen Canada.

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GT model shown
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*MSRP for 2009 Vibe base (excluding freight). Freight ($1160), licence, insurance, registration, PPSA, administration fees, duties and taxes not included. Dealers are free to set individual prices. † Whichever comes first. See dealer for limited warranty details. Applies to 2009 models. Excludes Medium-Duty Trucks. ‡Fuel consumption determined using Transport Canada approved methodology for 2009 Vibe with 1.8L and automatic transmission.

Aiming for accident-free cars

Swedish automaker Volvo's vision is to design cars that should not crash.

In the shorter term, its aim is that by 2020 no one should be killed or injured in one of its cars.

"We don't accept that people lose their lives in airplane accidents, so why should we regard car accidents as inevitable?" says Jan Ivarsson, head of safety strategy at the Volvo Car Corporation.

The World Health Organization estimates that some 1.2 million people are killed and more than 50 million are injured in traffic accidents every year. These figures are expected to rapidly increase if no action is taken. Volvo is determined to take the lead by using its vision of a collision-free future as a guiding principle.

To further address situations that might lead to accidents, Volvo has introduced a new strategy that includes a broader view of safety than the traditional focus on accidents. Even if the technology to design a collision-free traffic environment is not in place yet, the safety experts at Volvo say they know what they want to achieve.

Five phases

They look into the driver's whole journey, from everyday driving to after a collision. The car's safety functions can be divided into five phases:

Phase 1: Normal driving — Driver kept informed on driving status and driver concentration.

Phase 2: Conflict — Driver involved in a potentially hazardous situation, but able to cope with it.

Phase 3: Avoidance — Driver less capable of coping with the situation.

Phase 4: Damage reduction — Driver and car not capable of avoiding collision. Preparation for collision, reduction of crash forces.

Phase 5: After collision — Driver offered assistance and rescue.

Volvo follows the principle that the driver should be in command. The "intelligence" of the car should support the driver, for instance by monitoring drowsiness or distraction. It can also warn the driver when the distance to other cars is too short.

It is not until the driver fails to react and a collision is imminent or unavoidable, that the car "takes over" from the driver, for example by auto braking. The lowered impact speed leads to less crash energy, which in turn increases the performance of the car's protective safety systems such as seatbelts, airbags and crumple zones.

Safety technology

In the near future Volvo plans to introduce safety technologies that make it possible to detect and autobrake for pedestrians and even auto-steer away from oncoming cars

With this new vision, the company challenges not only itself but also the auto industry and governments, since a collision-free future cannot be obtained by one carmaker alone. Safe traffic has three main stakeholders: The car manufacturers; the drivers; and the owners of the infrastructure (the relevant authorities).

Co-operation between road traffic authorities and other parts of the auto industry is important in order to gain solutions that will have a big impact.

"There is considerable safety potential in creating communication between cars and infrastructure. Two cars could, for example, warn each other of traffic back-ups or slippery roads. Infrastructure sensors could warn the driver of people or animals crossing the road," explains Ivarsson.

Volvo is developing various systems to improve car safety such as collision avoidance by auto steering, top, and collision warning with auto braking.

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Mazda slashes 2009 prices

Mazda has revealed it is reducing the manufacturer suggested retail prices (MSRPs) for its 2009 models. The reductions range from $800 to $3,200 — or 4 per cent to 12 per cent — compared to the outgoing 2008 models.

The new, second-generation Mazda6 sedan arrives at dealerships in August with an MSRP of $22,495 in four-cylinder GS trim. It includes several standard features not previously available and is still $2,000 (8 per cent) less than the same '08 model. The GT model, with a four-cylinder engine, carries a 2009 retail price of $27,395, a reduction of $3,000, or 10 per cent.

MSRPs of the 2009 Mazda3 sedan and hatchback, and Mazdaspeed versions, have been reduced by $2,000 on all trim grades.

Chowder chow-down
Who makes the best fried clams, fish cakes and seafood chowder? The eighth annual Atlantic Seafood Festival, *atlanticseafoodfestival.com*, to be held Aug. 21 to 24 in Moncton, N.B., will draw restaurants from across the region to cooking competitions — and visitors will be able to taste the results. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Travel

Animal encounter

The Alaska SeaLife Center has launched a program called Marine Mammal Encounter, which lets visitors get up close and personal with resident sea lions and harbor seals including Snapper, a 400-plus-pound harbor seal. Guests can participate in a harbor seal training session with the centre's mammalogists. Visit *alaskasealife.org*. TRAVELALASKA.COM

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D.C. – done dirt cheap

There are so many free and cheap things to do in Washington, D.C, that the biggest challenge is carving out enough time to take advantage of them. Many museums, monuments and other institutions — from the zoo to the botanic garden — run by the federal government charge no admission.

But even if you've been here, done that 15 times over, the capital is packed with new and overlooked attractions. Finding a parking spot, however, is one aggravation you do want to miss. So ditch your car, hop on Metrorail, *wmata.com*, and enjoy packing a light wallet for once.

The usual suspects: The National Mall (Smithsonian metro stop, *nps.gov/nama*) has enough free offerings to fill a D.C. vacation on its own. The monuments are, well, monumental. Try taking them in by night for a new perspective. The hush of the evening and the smaller crowds will enhance the experience.

If you want to go to the top of the Washington Monument, the same-day allotment of free tickets gets snapped up early, so pay the $1.50 US per ticket fee to order them in advance at *nps.gov/wamo/planyourvisit/feesandreservations.htm*. The free Smithsonian museums, *si.edu/museums*, have something for every interest. Two newer museums — the International Spy Museum ($17) and the Newseum ($20) — could give you sticker shock, *spymuseum.org* and *newseum.org*. But maybe you can justify their expense if you cost-average those tickets with all the free stuff.

JACQUELYN MARTIN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., a visitor poses with a portrait of mock television pundit Stephen Colbert.

Too often overlooked (and free): The U.S. Botanic Garden (Capitol South metro) is a cool and soothing refuge, *usbg.gov*, with fabulous special displays at Christmas. It's worth leaving the mall area to see the National Portrait Gallery, *npg.si.edu*, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, *americanart.si.edu*.

Both museums share a newly renovated historic building at Eighth and F Streets, at the Gallery Place/Chinatown metro stop. At the National Arboretum in northeast D.C., *usna.usda.gov/index.html*, you'll forget you're in Washington — until you see the original Corinthian columns from the U.S. Capitol.

Concerts: Free summertime military concerts abound. The Washington Post's Weekend section details week-to-week particulars. On Fridays in the summer and into the fall, there are free, outdoor jazz concerts at the National Gallery of Art's sculpture garden, an unbeatable setting, *nga.gov/programs/jazz*.

Bar scene: Local 16 and Cafe Citron are two bars with no cover where you can dance. Citron, at 1343 Conn. Ave. on Dupont Circle, gets pretty packed on the weekends and plays Latin music. Local 16, near the Green Line's U Street stop, brings in different DJs on the weekends, *tablezen.com/local16*. It also has a nice rooftop deck.

At the Reef, in Adams Morgan, at 2446 18th St., NW, *thereefdc.com*, you're surrounded by wall-to-wall aquariums, creating an exotic underwater ambience. The top floor has a bar (with not cover charge) and dining area overlooking the Capitol.

Get out there: You will never spend a better $8 than on renting a kayak for an hour from Thompson Boat Center on the Potomac River in Georgetown, *thompsonboatcenter.com*. You also can rent bicycles there for $8 an hour, and pedal yourself all over town.

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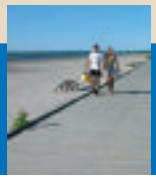

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Business-travel blues

According to a survey by the National Business Travelers' Association, more than two-thirds of Canadian business travellers paid more for hotel stays in 2007 than in the previous year, while 40 per cent experienced car rental rate increases. CALGARY.BBB.ORG

Helsinki's hidden delights

There's plenty to uncover in Finland's compact capital

PIA SIEVINEN
Metro World News

With its combination of historic town centre, seaside location and trendy design and music scene Finland's compact capital is the perfect spot for a city break.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Left, newly-opened bar Nolla attracts young-at-heart fashion, music, media and advertising types, who come for the beer, homemade food and DJs. Right, the reception at Hotel Klaus K, a hot spot with its own restaurants, bar, club and luxury day spa.

Where to stay

Budget

Omenahotel: This new budget hotel is completely automated: There is no reception or staff in the hotel, all reservations are made online, and you use a door code instead of a key to get into your small but smart room. Located right in the centre of town, near the shops, bars, restaurants and cafes. Eerikinkatu 24, 00100 Helsinki, omena.com.

Mid-range

Hotel Anna: Italian Vogue was won over by the charms of this small, cosy hotel. Built in 1926, this modest but lovely spot is set in the heart of a lively district with plenty of small shops, bars and restaurants. Annankatu 1, 00120 Helsinki, hotelanna.com.

Deluxe

Hotel Klaus K: This former business hotel has been transformed into a hip Scandinavian hot spot with its own restaurants, bar, club and luxury day spa. Room categories — from Mystical and Passion to Desire and Envy — are inspired by the Finnish epic Kalevala. Bulevardi 2, 00120 Helsinki, klauskhotel.com.

What to see

The Helsinki Cathedral and Senate Square: The ideal starting point for a walking tour of the city. At the heart of the historical centre, Senate Square is a fantastic example of Empire style, with the Lutheran Cathedral, monument to Tsar Alexander II, the senate and university buildings. Corner of the Aleksanterinkatu and Unioninkatu, 00100 Helsinki, *senaatintori.fi.*

Suomenlinna: This 18th-century, UNESCO-listed sea fortress built on the islands just off Helsinki is actually a suburb of Helsinki. More than 850 people live in the renovated ramparts and barracks. For visitors, it's an attractive summertime picnic spot. There is a regular ferry-boat service to Suomenlinna from the Market Square, 6 a.m.-2:20 a.m., all year round, suomenlinna.fi.

Temppeliaukion kirkko: Built inside solid rock between 1968-1969, Temppeliaukion kirkko — The Rock Church — is a popular wedding church in Helsinki. The 180 windows between the dome and wall bring light into the church, which is often used as a concert hall because of its great acoustics. Lutherinkatu 3, 00100 Helsinki.

Ateljee Bar: This bar on the 14th floor of the Hotel Torni gives an unobstructed view over the whole city, with the best views from the windows of the women's washrooms. Yrjönkatu 26, 00100 Helsinki.

The Market Square: The booths here sell traditional Finnish market foods and souvenirs, and the square is lined with lively cafés where you can people-watch and warm up on the coldest days. Open Monday to Friday 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., May-September; also Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On the South Harbour at the end of the Esplanade Park.

Where to shop

Food

The Old Market Hall: For the last century this bustling indoor market has been a food-lovers' destination with specialist stalls selling fish, meat, cheese, coffee, bread and pastries. Have lunch in a café or the sushi restaurant, or take away a snack of traditional small salmon sandwiches, wanhakauppahalli.fi.

Stockmann Herkku: This department store stocks a selection of the most typical local food products like vacuum-packed cold smoked salmon, mäti, herring and Baltic herring as well as fresh bread and other baked goods, *stockmann.fi.*

Hakaniemi market place and square: Find reindeer meat, pastries and Finnish fish on the ground floor. Upstairs, souvenirs include gifts from Lapland, clothes, fabrics and wooden handicrafts, hakaniemenkauppahalli.fi.

Fashion

Hanna Sarén: Designer Hanna Sarén started with hip shoes — as worn by Carrie in Sex and the City — and handbags, but now also designs clothes for men and women. Best place to see the collection is her cool beautiful shop. Fredrikinkatu 45, 00100 Helsinki, hannasaren.com.

Helsinki 10: Local fashion designers' collections as well as other Scandinavian and international fashion brands like Acne Jeans, Cheap Monday, Malene Birger and Martin Margiela meet in the store that reminds us of Colette in Paris and Corso Como 10 in Milan. Eerikinkatu 3, 00100 Helsinki, helsinki10.fi.

Ivana Helsinki: One of the most popular new Finnish fashion brands, Ivana Helsinki is known for its colourful prints and nature themes. Its central store stocks clothing, bed clothes and homeware. Uudenmaankatu 15, 00120 Helsinki, ivanahelsinki.com.

Wunder: Records, magazines, and fashion by Finnish and international designers including Daniel Palillo, Siv Stoldal, Ann-Sofie Back, Marjan Pejoski, Gaspard Yurkievich and some Finnish stuff. Laivurinrinne 1, 00120 Helsinki.

Music

Digelius: Stocks a fantastic selection of rare jazz albums. Laivurinrinne 2, 00120 Helsinki, digelius.com.

Lifesaver: This record shop has a broad selection of hip-hop music by local top DJs. Laivurinkatu 41, 00150 Helsinki, lifesaver.net.

Read more on page 27 ››

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METRO WORLD NEWS

Suomenlinna, an 18th-century, UNESCO-listed sea fortress built on the islands just off Helsinki is actually a suburb of Helsinki. More than 850 people live in the renovated ramparts and barracks. For visitors it's an attractive picnic spot.

›› Continued from page 26

Designer souvenirs

Artek: Shop at Finland's most prestigious and innovative furniture brands, producing furniture created by its founders, Alvar Aalto, as well as new Finnish designs. Eteläesplanadi 18, 00130 Helsinki, artek.fi.

Iittala: Named after a tiny village in southern Finland, Iittala's 1920s designs by modernist trailblazers including Kaj Franck, Aino and Alvar Aalto set the standard for the company that's a driving force of Scandinavian design. Pohjoisesplanadi 25, 00100 Helsinki, iittala.fi.

Marimekko: Established in 1951, Marimekko is the leading Finnish textile and clothing design company. This national treasure is known for colourful prints and simple modern design. Among the most interesting young designers is Samu-Jussi Koski. Pohjoisesplanadi 2 and 31, 00100 Helsinki, marimekko.fi.

Design Forum Shop: As well as selling 100 per cent Finnish objects of glass, wood and ceramics, textiles, industrial design, publications and jewelry, there are also interesting contemporary design exhibitions and a small coffee shop. Erottajankatu 7, 00130 Helsinki, designforum.fi.

Where to eat

Traditional

Restaurant Kosmos: For more than 80 years, Kosmos has attracted a mix of artists and politicians with its congenial atmosphere and its traditional Finnish dishes made of fresh indigenous ingredients: Reindeer, fish and meat, vegetables, mushrooms and blinis. Classics include Steak Tartar à la Kosmos and vorschmack and cloudberries for dessert. Kalevankatu 3, 00100 Helsinki, ravintolakosmos.fi.

Trendy

Ateljé Finne: The second venture from the two young chefs behind the small and cosy restaurant Kuurna, Ateljé Finne offers plain but chic Finnish style dishes made with simple but high quality fresh raw ingredients. Arkadiankatu 14, 00100 Helsinki, atelje finne.fi.

Top notch

Restaurant Savoy: At the very top of Helsinki's restaurant scene since the 1930s, with an interior designed by Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. Eteläesplanadi 14, 00130 Helsinki. royal ravintolat.com/savoy.

Where to drink:

Bali-Hai: An easygoing corner bar and restaurant in the trendy Punavuori area, named after the mythical island. Popular with a creative crowd. Iso Rooberinkatu 35, 00120 Helsinki. Mon. to Fri., 11 a.m. to midnight; Sat.-Sun. noon to midnight, tinyurl.com/24hysx.

Nolla: This newly-opened bar is a sister of the popular Bar Erottaja where young-at-heart fashion, music, media, advertising and art people go for beers, homemade food and DJs playing live. Fredrikinkatu 56, 00100 Helsinki. Wed.-Sat., noon to 3 a.m., Sun.-Tue., noon to 2 a.m..

Wave: A laid back, trendy bar and restaurant by the sea with a terrace. When the sun is shining, this is Helsinki's answer to Ibiza, complete with house music and beautiful people. Hietalahdenranta 6, 00120 Helsinki. Wed.-Sat., 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., Sun.-Tue., 4 p.m. to midnight, thewave.fi.

Where to go clubbing

Den Kungliga Klubben: This intense club with four floors hosts a lively 20-something crowd and the hottest club DJs. The dress code is informal, so it's fine to wear jeans and T-shirts. Mannerheimintie 6 A, 3rd floor, 00100 Helsinki. Wed.-Sat., 9 p.m to 4 a.m., denkungliga.com.

Mecca: Fashionable nightclub based in the Palace Kamp complex of luxury restaurants and hotels on the waterfront.

The venue is stylish and the atmosphere is relaxed, with its 30-something city crowd dressing up at the weekend. Korkeavuorenkatu, 00100 Helsinki. Mon.-Tue., 4 p.m. to midnight, Wed.-Thu., 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., Fri.-Sat., 4 p.m. to 4 a.m., palacekamp.fi/ravintolat/mecca.

Teatteri: One of the most popular nightclubs and restaurants in Helsinki, with restaurant, bars and terrace. Pohjoisesplanadi, 00100 Helsinki. Mon.-Thu., 11 a.m. to 2 a.m., Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m. to 4 a.m., Sun., noon to 1 a.m., teatteri.fi.

Kuudes linja: This underground club plays host to local and international DJs for fans of hip hop and house. Hämeentie 13, 00, Helsinki. Tue.-Thu., 9 p.m. to 3 a.m., Fri.-Sat., 10 p.m. to 4 a.m., Sun., 10 p.m. to 3 a.m., kuudeslinja.com.

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Deadwood bound
A Fort Pierre-to-Deadwood trail ride, recreating a trek taken by thousands who travelled the route more than a century ago, is underway in South Dakota. The commemorative ride with some 300 people on horseback and in horse-drawn wagons will conclude Aug. 15. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Travel in brief

NOVA SCOTIA The high price of gas and strength of the Canadian dollar appear to playing a role in Nova Scotia's tourism industry so far this year. While the number of visitors is on par with last year's, operators are reporting a drop in American travellers.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rural Ramble brings city folk to farms east of T.O.

Farms scattered amid the rolling hills of Northumberland County will welcome visitors this month for a close-up view of agriculture in the region east of Toronto. The ninth annual Rural Ramble Farm Tour is set for Aug. 16 and 17.

With tour passports in hand ($15 for adults in advance, $5 children), participants can plan a route that takes in traditional and specialty farms as well as various agri-businesses.

Sites this year include an alpaca farm, a sheep and beef farm, an equestrian centre, a farm that makes skin-care lavender products, a dairy farm and a fruit and vegetable orchard.

As well, the Pork Producers Marketing Yard in Campbellford will provide information on hog identification and feeding, the Oak Heights Estate Winery in Warkworth will offer tastings, and staff at Empire Cheese and Butter in Campbellford will answer questions about cheese making.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO
An alpaca farm is among the attractions at the Rural Ramble Farm Tour, set for Aug. 16 and 17.

more details online

- Northumberland County is about a 90-minute drive from Toronto. For details on obtaining passports (including family passes) and on host sites, visit www.ruralramblefarmtour.com

Giant handbag to land in New York

NEW YORK CITY A spaceship-like pavilion crammed with original artwork will land in New York's Central Park this fall. It's the latest stop in a worldwide advertising blitz by Chanel to pay homage to its iconic quilted handbag. Renowned London architect Zaha Hadid was commissioned to create the 700-square-metre structure made of lightweight panels and fitted like a jigsaw puzzle. Organizers say the pavilion is like a handbag, "a completely portable and functional container." It will house works by 15 contemporary artists who were asked to use the classic handbag — first designed in 1955 —as a "jumping off point" for their self-expression. The exhibition, entitled Mobile Art, was conceived by fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld. It will run from Oct. 20 to Nov. 9. Details at *chanel-mobileart.com*.

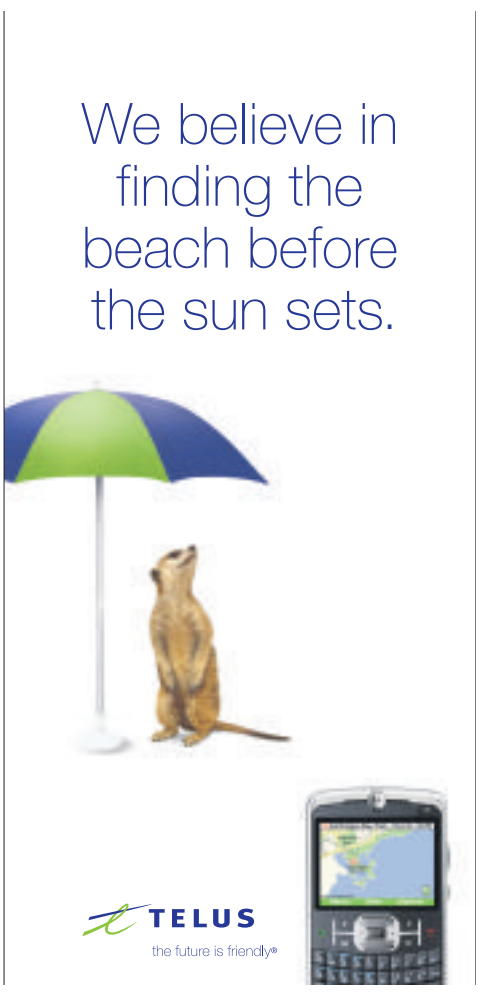
Humane Society advises visitors to China on 'animal-friendly' products, services

CHINA The Humane Society of the United States and the Humane Society International are offering advice for people travelling to China for the Olympics or at any other time.

The organization says its tips on what to buy and what to eat are designed "to help those wishing to make animal-friendly decisions while in China."

For example, the Humane Society says that although it is legal to sell ivory in China, it is illegal to bring it back to the United States because it comes from poached elephants. (Products made from ivory may not be brought into Canada either.) Some traditional Chinese medicines contain ingredients from endangered animals as well.

Also, beware of items made from or trimmed in fur or leather. The Humane Society says dogs and cats are among the animals killed for their fur in China. In addition, the Humane Society cautions against buying items made of wood because China imports tropical timber from places like Indonesia, "which destroys orangutan habitat." Souvenirs recommended by the Humane Society include tea, jewelry, carvings and other crafts made of cloth, pottery, paper, stone or metal.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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Upsizing
New York City's Museum of Arts + Design will reopen on Sept. 27 in its new digs on Columbus Circle. With triple the space of its previous facility, MAD will be able to dedicate galleries to its growing permanent collection for the first time. Visit madmuseum.org. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Mining Sri Lanka's sapphires

JULIA DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

Above, in the Ratnapura region, there are plenty of mining pits like this one, hand-dug by teams of workers on the hunt for precious stones. Below, no sapphires this time around, only a few mature semi-precious stones that have little resale value.

TheTravelJunkie
Julia Dimon
thetraveljunkie.ca

It's a country of coastlines, religious festivals and tea plantations. Formerly Ceylon, Sri Lanka is home to some 21 million people who rock a lion on their national flag, love spicy curry, and — despite the huge popularity of cricket — boast volleyball as their national sport.

Day two of my weeklong journey finds me travelling from the urban sprawl of Colombo to the green rice paddies of the Sri Lankan countryside. From the comfort of an air-conditioned bus, I watch local life speed past.

Children skip to school in crisp, white uniforms. Women work among vipers in sugarcane plantations.

Men dig around in the muck, searching for unpolished gemstones. In the Ratnapura region, there are plenty of mining pits, hand-dug by teams of workers on the hunt for precious stones.

Sri Lanka is known as "the island of gems." It has a long history of gem mining and trading, dating back some 2,000 years.

"This is one of the best places in the world to buy sapphires," my guide tells me. Who knew? I've heard of Colombia's emeralds and the Philippines' pearls, but I had no idea this tiny South Asian country was big on the jewelry scene.

I ask if we can stop to check out the mines. I hop out of the bus and descend upon the crew of nine, cameras and questions blazing.

Teeth stained red from betelnut (a popular chewing-tobacco-like stimulant), they kindly take me through the gem-mining, or "gemming," process.

With rudimentary machines that sputter and smoke, they dredge for deposits. As with panning for gold, they take a rattan basket and swirl it around, trying to extract the valuable gems from the clay, gravel and sand. This job places them into waist-high water, and knee-deep mud as thick as cement.

I make one false step and sink into soil that swallows my flip-flop whole. Clearly this is a messy job, and a dangerous one at that.

As I survey the workers, many look injured — one has a cut over his eye, another a bloody bandage covering his big toe.

Despite these frequent on-the-job injuries, there is no disability or unemployment insurance. If the crew members get hurt, they're on their own.

Though they may work all day, they only get paid if they find something worth selling. The investor takes 50 per cent of the sales and the workers split the rest amongst themselves.

Worried that the workers might swallow the gem (to cash in for themselves), the investor is the only one allowed to sort through the finds of the day. Huddled around the boss, the team watches eagerly as he picks at the gravel by hand. No sapphires this time around, only a few mature semi-precious stones that have little resale value.

I have a new appreciation for sapphires and, more importantly, for the individuals who toil to find them. I'm truly amazed at the blood, sweat and time it takes to get the gem out of the ground and on its way to your jewelry case.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing on OLN, and editor of thetraveljunkie.ca.

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The unstoppable Olympic tourist

84-year-old Montreal cyclist will schmooze his way to 12th Games

In four world tours on his bicycle, Albert LeBlanc has slept in prisons, had guns pointed at his head and developed a taste for monkey meat.
The 84-year-old Quebecer has also taken his trusty bicycle — either by pedal power or on airplanes — to every summer Olympics since the Tokyo games in 1964.

ANDY BLATCHFORD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Albert LeBlanc, 84, from Quebec's Gaspe region, is taking his bike to the Beijing Olympics — the 12th time he's taken his bike to the summer Games. Leblanc has circled the globe four times by bicycle and rode 900 kilometres to Montreal to catch the first of several flights to Beijing.

Fresh off a 900-kilometre bike ride to Montreal, the athletic man with a firm handshake is now aiming for his 12th Olympics.

"It's one of the greatest drugs in the world," he said in an interview at his brother's house in Montreal.

"I could have taken drugs or stayed home and done nothing, watched television, hung out in taverns or whatever, but no, I love adventure.

"I don't want to stop now, even at 84."

LeBlanc recently left his home on Quebec's Gaspe Peninsula for Montreal to catch the first of several flights to Beijing.

He doesn't pedal around the world like he used to, so he's flying to Beijing with his white bicycle, which is equipped with a Chinese flag, a globe fixed to the handlebars and a Virgin Mary statue tied to the frame.

LeBlanc said he can't wait to ride it across Tiananmen Square.

The chatty traveller from the village of Maria has never paid for an Olympic ticket, but has nevertheless schmoozed his way into almost all of the opening and closing ceremonies since 1964.

The lone exception was the opener in Moscow, which he missed after being delayed at the Soviet border.

> **"I could have taken drugs or stayed home and done nothing, watched television, hung out in taverns or whatever, but no, I love adventure."**
> Albert LeBlanc

He's still working on getting himself into the Aug. 8 opening ceremonies in Beijing.

"We're waiting for good news," said LeBlanc, who has waved Maria's municipal flag at every ceremony.

"I think we have a good chance of getting them."

The last time he was on a global bike ride was 1988, but it's hard to forget memories from decades of touring.

LeBlanc has slept on the streets in India, munched on monkey in Africa, contracted malaria three times, been imprisoned, robbed of $200 at gunpoint in Japan and lost his way in more than one jungle.

He's also survived his share of spills.

On his way to the 1988 Seoul Olympics, he was knocked off his bike in Thailand and broke six ribs.

His journeys have also raised money for charity — this year he gathered $2,500 for a children's hospital — but for LeBlanc, it's all about the adventure.

"I have proof at home — the longest passport in the world," he said.

LeBlanc has worked on railroads, as a bartender and in construction. But when the time comes to leave, he has always just packed up and split.

He said cycling, cross-country skiing and relatively clean living have kept him in good shape.

"It just seems like I'm always ready to bike," said LeBlanc, who is married but never had kids.

"I've been working out all my life. Look at me, I'm in fairly good shape for a man 84-years-old."

LeBlanc's sister-in-law called him an inspiration.

"At first I thought he was crazy doing all that," Augusta Allain said.

"People think he's great because not everybody can do that. Most of the people his age are either walking with a walker or in wheelchairs.

"We're proud of him."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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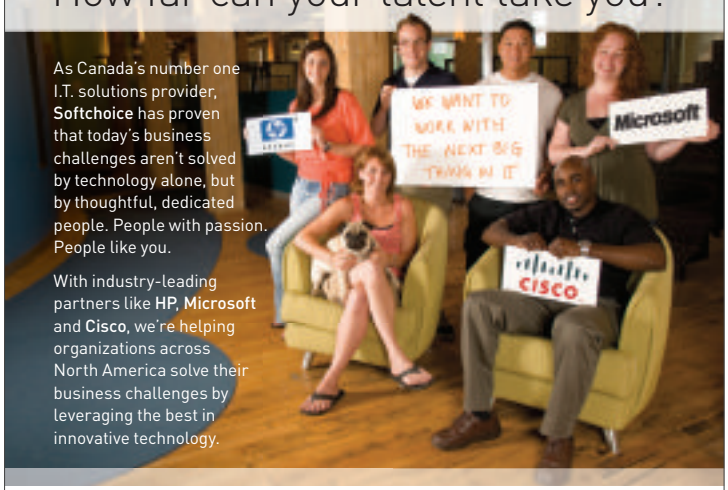

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First Nations University enrolment plummets

A sharp decline in enrolment at the First Nations University of Canada in recent years has prompted school officials to undertake an enrolment review. In 2007, 848 students attended FNUC, compared to a record figure of more than 2,500 in 2004. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology

$85M for UBC

Last Wednesday, UBC's student union, the Alma Mater Society, voted to contribute $85 million to a new Student Union Building to be built at University Square, making it the largest single donation in UBC's history. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Beware thy neighbour's cubicle

- If your cubicle is pristine while your neighbour's is a mounting pile of uneaten food, those bacteria will multiply and crawl over that cubicle wall.

Keep creepy-crawlies from your keyboard

The average office has hundreds of times more bacteria than a toilet seat. The "enter" button on your office fax machine is probably a rank stew of vile bacteria. And here's a controversial bit — women spread more germs than men.

Those are some of the findings of America's leading expert on work and home hygiene, Charles Gerba, a professor of microbiology at the University of Arizona.

Before women take offence, the higher germ concentration is proof that women have a healthier diet than men. Women, Gerba found, tend to store apples, bananas and other biodegradable, healthy food at their desk while men go for less nutritious and therefore less germ-ridden junk food, such as gum or potato chips.

Over the past two years, Gerba and his team have seen an improvement in overall office hygiene as desk wipes and hand cleaners become more popular.

However, in these summer months, with air conditioning units and ventilation shafts a good breeding ground for bacteria, there are a number of points experts want you to be aware of.

• FIRST, WASH

Washing your hands for 20 seconds under soap and running water is far better than a quick squirt of hand sanitizer at your desk, says Dean Cliver, a professor of food safety at the University of California.

While many hand sanitizers boast of anti-microbial properties, a scrub with ordinary soap is far better, Cliver said. Water penetrates much deeper, helping to remove food debris and other particles that hand sanitizer just doesn't reach.

> **"As soon as I see someone come into my office that I think is sick, I immediately grab the sanitizer."** Elizabeth Scott

• PROTECT YOUR FACE

Office workers touch their hands to their faces an average of 18 times an hour, according to Elizabeth Scott, a professor at the Simmons Center for Hygiene and Health in Boston.

When we touch our faces, we bring all the collected gunk of our keyboard, desktop or BlackBerry right to our respiratory and digestive system every 3½ minutes — bacteria and viruses couldn't ask for a better transportation system.

Scott recommends washing hands regularly and, yes, using hand sanitizer, especially after shaking hands with a colleague suspected of having a cold or another illness. "As soon as I see someone come into my office that I think is sick, I immediately grab the sanitizer. You can shake hands at business meetings and still protect yourself," she said.

• DISPOSE OF UNWANTED FOOD

Don't let food accumulate in your desk drawer, where it will provide a giant breeding ground for bacteria. According to Gerba, women bring healthier food to their desktop, such as bananas and fruit, which provide a boon for nutrient-hungry bacteria.

Gerba recommends the rapid disposal of any unwanted food; hassled employees often forget about food lodged at the back of desk drawers.

"The office refrigerator is a total mess as well," he said. "People do not keep to the disposal rules, and the refrigerator is taking in food from many, many different households."

• CLEAN OUT THAT KEYBOARD

Shake an average office keyboard and you are likely to find what Gerba calls "the bagel shower" — bits of bread particles and other food bites lodged between the keys.

Most office cleaning companies do not touch computers or keyboards because they don't want to risk causing any damage. Hygiene is left to the employee, and many don't bother.

Gerba recommends an alcohol-based sanitizer for cleaning the keyboard. Simply blowing compressed air over it is not going to remove bacteria clinging to the surface, he warned.

Perhaps the best combination is that used by Brendan Cahalan, a risk manager with Standard Motor Products in Long Island City in New York. He uses an alcohol-based cleaner on his computer, as well as compressed air to clean out any debris between the keys.

Beware of bread crumbs in your keyboard at work, they can allow harmful bacteria to grow. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Construction at University of Winnipeg
Last Wednesday marked the first day of construction of the University of Winnipeg's McFeetors Hall: Great-West Life Student Residence. The housing facility is named after uWinnipeg alumnus Raymond L. McFeetors, who, along with Great-West Lifeco Inc., committed $2.67 million to the project. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Court rules for employee induced to leave old job

Promises of 'dream team' lead to additional damages

WorkplaceLaw

Routine may be agreeable — but think twice before trading routine for the temptation of change.

A "lifer" of the auto sales industry, after working at a series of dealerships, 57-year-old Janet Deplanche had finally found her home. For 10 years, Deplanche prospered as a business manager for Gemini Ford in Hamilton, Ont., believing it would be her last stop until she retired.

While working in the industry, Deplanche befriended Christine McGillvray. The two grew close, staying in touch over the years. When a position later became vacant at McGillvray's dealership, Leggat Pontiac Buick Cadillac Inc., McGillvray turned to Deplanche, seeking to convince her to leave Gemini and join her at Leggat.

Swapping employers wasn't an easy sell for Deplanche. She was popular and secure at Gemini and personal problems had left her hesitant toward change. Despite knowing that Deplanche was content with her job, McGillvray continued to petition her to leave, enticing her with notions of working with a "dream team" at a job that offered a higher volume of sales.

In response to McGillvray's entreaties, Deplanche eventually agreed to meet with Leggat's representatives. Terms were agreed to and soon Deplanche bid farewell to Gemini to join her friend at Leggat.

After the honeymoon period, however, the relationship soured. Deplanche was cautioned that her profit margins and paperwork were unsatisfactory and she was given a letter warning her that her performance needed to improve. Before two years passed, Deplanche was fired.

Not every employee recruited away from another job can claim legal inducement. It must be eminently clear that the employee was not already looking to leave.

Deplanche had had enough. At 57 and without a job or income for the first time in years, she moved to New Brunswick to look for a comparable job. Not before suing.

Typically, an employee of short tenure is only entitled to a limited period of warning or pay, known as severance, after being fired. However, where an employee has been induced or recruited away from a secure job, a court may attribute his or her prior tenure to the recruiting employer. In this case, Deplanche argued that Legatt should be responsible for the 10 years she worked for Gemini and not her mere two years with Leggat.

The court agreed: It was clear that Deplanche had little motive to leave her secure job at Gemini and that McGillvray's entreaties went beyond the normal degree of persuasion expected when recruiting an employee. As a result, it awarded Deplanche eight months' salary for wrongful dismissal — a judgment usually reserved for longer-term employees.

Both employees and employers can glean the following lessons from this case:

- Not every employee recruited away from another job can claim legal inducement. It must be eminently clear that the employee was not already looking to leave.
- After a period of time, usually three to four years, the practical effect of a claim for inducement loses its value. Employees terminated shortly after being recruited are viewed as more vulnerable.
- Employers can limit inducement claims with properly drafted employment contracts. I have increasingly seen clauses that prevent employees from making these claims.

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer focusing on the law of dismissal; dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.

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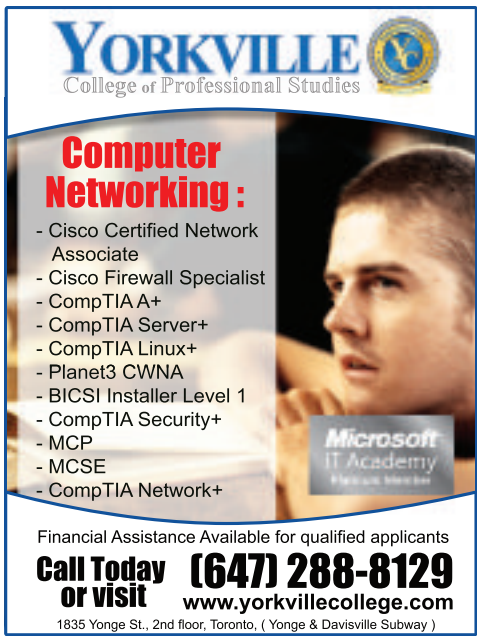

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Lie to Me, Williams says
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Entertainment

Ugly guests
Live with Regis and Kelly co-hosts Kelly Ripa and Regis Philbin will appear as themselves on the Sept. 25 premiere of Ugly Betty.
E! NEWS ONLINE

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

In brief

TV Singer Joss Stone is to play Anne of Cleves in the third season of The Tudors, BBC News Online reports. It will be the first TV acting role for the 22-year-old, who made her debut in the fantasy film Eragon in 2006. METRO NEWS SERVICES

DiCaprio in talks to play Lenin

MOVIES Leonardo DiCaprio is reportedly in talks to play Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin in a new movie, imdb.com reports.

The actor is said to be in negotiations to take on the leading role in forthcoming film Lenin's Brain, according to British newspaper The Sun. Alexander Der Borodyansky will direct, and he insists DiCaprio is perfect for the part because of his striking physical resemblance to the communist politician, who died in 1924. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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New sisterhood

Traveling Pants author dishes on real friendships

JIM REYNO
jim.reyno@metronews.ca

Ann Brashares is the author of the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants series. She says friendship can feel like a real sisterhood.

Carmen, Tibby, Bridget, Lena — and you. You don't have to squeeze into the jeans to be part of the Sisterhood.

"The idea of there being four equally weighted protagonists, it makes you feel like you're part of something," Ann Brashares said about the appeal of her bestselling teen series The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants. "You're almost part of this group, this sisterhood. It feels communal and welcoming, this governing spirit of a very deep and unconditional friendship."

Brashares, in Toronto recently to promote the movie Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2, believes in bonds. It seems sisters don't have to do it for themselves.

"I think there's always the fantasy of a really great, sustaining friendship. And I've tried to depict that — realistically," Brashares said. "I believe those friendships really do exist. I don't think it's fantasy.

"This is the kind of friendship people want, where it's the kind of friends who are happy when you're happy, and sad when you're sad."

The second Sisterhood movie, which opens today, draws from the final three books in the series.

"I feel like it was a difficult job to pull that together, and that they really managed to do it," Brashares said about Pants 2. "I think there are some insights and connections that aren't necessarily in the books. But that was interesting to me."

There may not be another Sisterhood movie, but the story lives on. In January, 3 Willows: The Sisterhood Grows is scheduled to hit the shelves. In the book, Brashares continues her exploration of women maintaining friendships while growing into separate, individual lives.

But the exploration will be in a familiar context.

"It takes place in the same world as the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants books, but there are new characters," Brashares said about 3 Willows. "There are many, many things that are familiar, even little cameos of old characters. They grew up in the same town, and they are starting the same high school where the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants girls went. And they know of them."

Brashares, who published her first adult novel last year, has no problem revisiting the Sisterhood — as long as it's on her terms.

"I don't want to feel like I have to keep going back to the same thing because that's what people want from me," she said. "I want to be able to continue to grow as a writer, to do new things, to try new things.

"And when the spirit moves me to write about a character I've written about before, I want to have the freedom to do that."

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Weaver may return to Alien

Actress Sigourney Weaver, right, has hinted she may return to her iconic role in a fifth instalment of the Alien franchise. Weaver starred as steely space Lieut. Ellen Ripley in the cult sci-fi movies. IMDB.COM

No cramping their style

AMANDA TRUSCOTT
for Metro Canada

The men of the Midway State have traded their bunk beds for a tour bus, and they couldn't be happier about it, even if the bus and the cramped room they once shared have more in common than they would like.

The original tight quarters were the price the band paid to move from Collingwood to Toronto. Drummer Daenen Bramberger explains, "We were just out of high school. We didn't have a lot of money, so the four of us split one out of a two-bedroom apartment, with two bunk beds, just so we could be here in the thick of it."

Singer-pianist Nathan Ferraro adds, "When you wake up in the morning and there's, like, a tiny ass room and four dudes sleeping in it every night, it's kind of like a tour bus, you know, so we're kind of back to Square 1."

Midway State's new album Holes is a catchy, soulful blend of piano-driven, hook-heavy songs reminiscent of Coldplay and Ben Folds.

In that sense, maybe, but with some crucial differences: New bass and guitar players, a debut album released by Interscope Records, and an iTunes Single of the Week that got rave reviews from downloaders.

Their album, Holes, is a catchy, soulful blend of piano-driven, hook-heavy songs reminiscent of Coldplay and Ben Folds.

Their music caught the attention of industry executives after they released the video for their song Change for You over YouTube.

Stevo of Sum 41 directed the video, done in one continuous, unedited shot.

"If you could see the behind-the-scenes footage, it's crazy. Like, 40 people running around and throwing stuff out of the way," says Ferraro.

"When the camera would zoom in on my face, all the crew would come in and change the set behind me, and these guys would change clothes and run in and out, then it would zoom out and it would be like a new room."

Ferraro says, "It was kind of like a magic video for us in a way because it was so just like off-the-cuff, but it turned out to be a huge thing for our band."

In concert

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Sequel

The Jonas Brothers are up for a sequel to the movie Camp Rock. "We've been looking into scheduling when we can do that because we've been busy with touring, but we would love to," Joe Jonas, left, said. EW.COM

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●●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

Big cheer for the Sisterhood

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2

Director: Sanaa Hamri
Stars: America Ferrera, Blake Lively, Amber Tamblyn, Alexis Bledel
Classification: PG13
Rating: ●●●

JIM REYNO
jim.reyno@metronews.ca

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 is in theatres today.

There's a telling, tense scene early in Sisterhood 2 where America Ferrera, Blake Lively, Amber Tamblyn and Alexis Bledel gather to renew the ritual of the travelling pants. The pants (as you would know if you're familiar with the first movie or Ann Brashares' series of novels) miraculously fit all four friends. They pass them off to one another and stay close at the same time. It's a common bond for the four unlikely but likable friends as they take separate paths to adulthood.

But hang on — those jeans (and those friendships) appear to be fading fast. The ritual has become tiresome for three of them, and it looks like the BFFs might be DOA.

And so Sisterhood 2 explores how the foursome handle increasingly adult responsibilities in their ever-separating lives, all the while struggling to maintain their childhood friendships.

There's a lot of life packed into the four lives: A pregnancy scare, relationship issues, coping with death, family bonds, new love vs. old flame, a new career … the stories of their lives are intercut, and Hamri generally does a good job of giving each story the right amount of room to push the plot along. Two of the lead actors really shine: Blake Lively (Gossip Girl) is a striking presence, radiating from the screen in every scene she's in. America Ferrera (Ugly Betty) seems to have perfected the Cinderella/underdog thing. It's impossible not to cheer for her.

At the end of the day, Sisterhood 2 is a big cheer — hooray for the friends as everything works out (of course).

In reality, most of us do change and outgrow our childhood friendships. That catchup phone call, e-mail, lunch, or coffee date never comes.

Sisterhood 2 gives us the chance to vicariously stay close to everyone we love.

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IN THEATRES AUGUST 22
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GETTY IMAGES

Giuliana Rancic

Rancic takes agency to court

SUING E! talking head Giuliana Rancic is taking the William Morris Agency to court, PageSix.com reports.

Rancic, who hosts E! News with Ryan Seacrest, is suing her former agency for "breach of contract and fiduciary duty," according to her lawyer, Paul Sorrell. "They put the interests of other clients they had ahead of hers," Sorrell said. "It was a major conflict of interest, so she fired them. She's claiming all money back that she paid them and damages in the millions."

William Morris declined comment. Rancic is now repped by CAA.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Film uncorks little

Bottle Shock

Director: Randall Miller
Stars: Allan Rickman, Bill Pullman
Classification: 14A
Rating: ⊕⊕

ADAM NAYMAN
for Metro Canada

Rachael Taylor and Freddy Rodriguez star in Bottle Shock.

Aside from a scene in which an anxious Bill Pullman obliterates the top of a bottle of wine with a samurai sword (his kingdom for a corkscrew!) there are no surprises in Bottle Shock. This is partially because its story — about a group of affable, flannel-clad Napa Valley winemakers who turn the industry on its snooty French nose by producing a top-shelf Chardonnay — is based in fact: In 1973, the California-based Chateau Montelana won a French tasting contest and made the marketplace safe for American plonk.

It's also because director Randall Miller never met a reaction shot or an overbearing music cue that he couldn't use: Bottle Shock is perfectly content to be pap. The material is interesting — especially after Jonathan Nossiter's epic wine doc Mondovino, which surveyed the fallout of the U.S. becoming a wine power — but the details are hackneyed. We get a perfectionist vintner father (Pullman) who tries to straighten out his layabout son (Chris Pine); an attractive blond intern (Rachael Taylor) splits her affections between said handsome layabout and his golden-palated, fetchingly dorky Latino pal (Freddy Rodriguez); meanwhile, a sassy local barmaid (Eliza Dushku) doles out wisdom and dues ex machinas.

The only performer to rise above the dully crowd-pleasing atmosphere is Alan Rickman as the Paris wine shop owner who puts the tasting contest in motion.

It's amusing to watch this impeccable actor play something of a sad sack, and a quick bit where he battles with a bothersome restaurant door is a master-class of strenuously maintained dignity.

⊕⊕⊕⊕⊕ A CLASSIC; ⊕⊕⊕⊕ EXCELLENT; ⊕⊕⊕ GOOD; ⊕⊕ FAIR; ⊕ POOR

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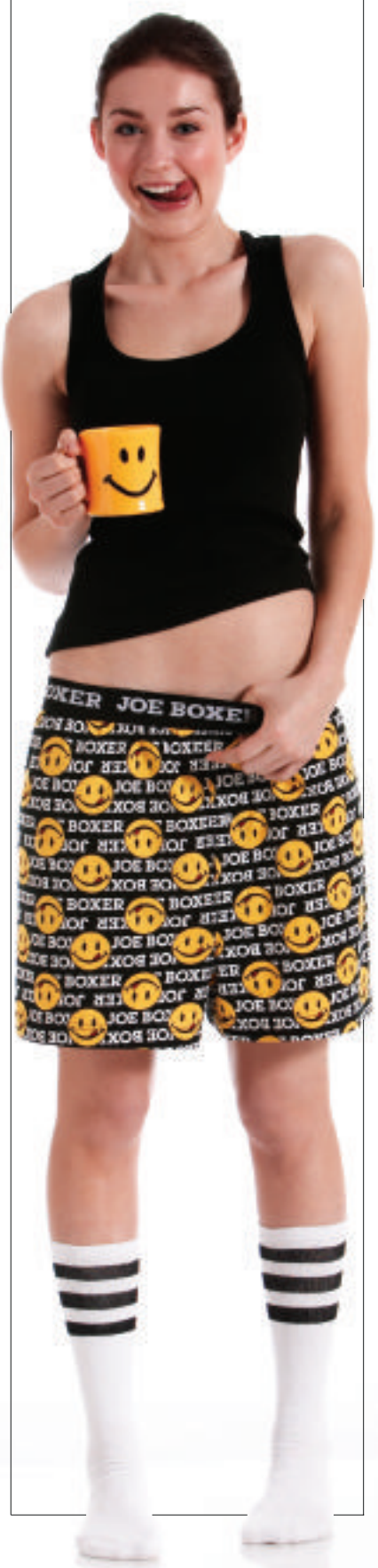

Moving on

American Idol executive producer and So You Think You Can Dance judge Nigel Lythgoe, left, has announced he's leaving Idol to devote his time to a new development venture with fellow Idol mastermind Simon Fuller. **E! NEWS ONLINE**

Entertainment in brief

REALITY TV A Texas mother of five is the new Nashville Star. Melissa Lawson beat fellow finalist Gabe Garcia on Monday night for the title on the country music reality series. Shawn Mayer came in third. The 32-year-old Lawson was overjoyed at winning, shouting "Oh my God!" She then performed her new single What If It All Goes Right. The song was scheduled to be played on country radio yesterday morning. Lawson wins a record contract after performing in Nashville for 11 weeks. The series, which switched to NBC this year after five seasons on the USA Network, has launched the careers of Miranda Lambert, Buddy Jewel and Chris Young. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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The unreal facts of reality TV

THE REAL THING: "I did it because I needed the money," recalls Matt Kennedy Gould, who briefly lived in the queasy glare of reality TV fame when he appeared on Joe Schmo, Spike TV's barely discernible parody of the genre.

"I lived with my parents. I had just dropped out of law school. I was a regular pot smoker. I didn't want to work."

For anyone who's wondered aloud where they find the sort of people who agree to appear on reality TV, now you know.

Entertainment Weekly has a reputation — eminently deserved — for being a bubbleheaded publicity organ, so you have to read its piece on reality TV has-beens like Gould looking back on their often-toxic efflorescence of fame as an inadvertent rebuttal to the most popular complaint directed at reality TV — that it's a stage-managed lie meant to dupe gullible viewers with the appearance of reality.

Well, yes, of course it is, but the EW piece blandly confirms that reality TV viewers are blithely aware of all this, and that speculating on the machinations behind the scenes, while enjoying the ragged morality play happening on the surface, has made reality TV viewing an experience as complex in its way as relaxing into the high-gloss edginess of an HBO drama.

You can't help but smile knowingly when you read Genevieve Deittrick's account of her time spent on the second season of Temptation Island with her fiancé Tony Schmitt.

"The producers really didn't like me too much. I went to college for criminal justice, forensics and ballistics, and you learn about interrogation methods where they deprive you of sleep, deprive you of food to wear you down, and after the first few days I realized that's what they were doing.

"We were hungry and it would be hours before we ate, and people's emotions would get high."

Contestants might be deprived of food, but they never lack for drink, according to several of the onetime reality inmates.

"You got gourmet chefs, you got Jacuzzis, you got all the alcohol you could want," recalls Billie Jeanne Houle, who appeared on Fox's Married By America.

Jennifer Braff, who did time on NBC's Age Of Love as one of the cougars competing for the affection of a younger man against a cohort of young things, recalls the show's reliance on social lubricants.

"You fill out your forms and tell a little about your personality.

"It said, 'What's your favourite drink?' And I said, 'I can get a little carried away with tequila.' Funny how tequila was always there."

Amanda Habrowski, who goes by the nickname "Ice" apparently, did a season on VH1's Flavor Of Love, and asked the unkind question, "Who the hell could fall in love with Flavor Flav?"

She was in tears when she left the show, however, but explains that it wasn't about the rejection.

"We lived the good life out there. That's why I cried at the end. Everyone's like, 'You didn't even like him!' I'm like, 'I'm leaving a pretty mansion in California! I'm not going to be pampered anymore!' That's why I was crying, man."

"We were hungry and it would be hours before we ate, and people's emotions would get high."
Former Temptation Island contestant Genevieve Deittrick

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

critics' corner

Supernatural
Fans knew Dean's (Jensen Ackles) days were numbered, but he wasn't supposed to go like this. In the gut-wrenching episode "Mystery Spot," Dean is fatally shot while he and Sam (Jared Padalecki) are investigating a man's disappearance. Sam's grief turns to surprise when he wakes up the next day to find his brother alive — but that's only because he's reliving the previous day, "Groundhog Day"-style, and seeing Dean die every day for weeks. 10 PM on SPC

Wife Swap
Big brother is into physical fitness, but it's kid brother who gets physical in this episode ... with his "new" mom. Alex, whose family runs a German-themed bed-and-breakfast inn where all three kids work, swaps families with Lisa, a stay-at-home mom who caters to her older son's dream of becoming a champion bodybuilder. Her younger boy, an artist, is left to fend for himself, and he doesn't take well to Alex's strict ways, to say the least. 8 PM on ABC

TO	Vu	SC	C		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 8/6/08	265	353	2	TVO	The Life of Birds		The Agenda With Steve Paikin		The Whistleblowers		Human Edge "China Blue"		Agenda-Paikin
	211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	Bones		NCIS "Probie"		Crime Stories		News (N)
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
	210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	22 Minutes	Little Mosque	Sophie	Simple Plan (N)		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	Friends	Hollywood	Make Me a Supermodel		Rock of Love-Bret Michaels		Entourage	Entourage	News (N)
	212	313	8	CTV	eTalk	Jeopardy!	So You Think You Can Dance The final four perform. (N)				CSI: NY (HDTV)		News (N)
	218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	Greatest American Dog		Janice Dickinson Modeling		True Hollywood Story (N)		News (N)
	137	763	13	TFO	Panorama	Jardins	Destination Nor'Ouest (SC)		*Avec tout mon amour* (2001) Jeanne Balibar.			Les Gens de...	Tournants
	-	-	14	-	Law & Order: SVU		News (N)		News (N)		King	King	Cold Case
	213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	Aliens-America	Aliens-America	24 Hour Cab Ride (DVS)		To Serve and Protect		Grill Rm.
	-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	Greatest American Dog		Criminal Minds (HDTV)		CSI: NY (HDTV)		News (N)
	-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	America's Got Talent		The Baby Borrowers (N)		Law & Order "Excalibur"		News (N)
	-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy!	Wife Swap "Graf/Medici"		Supernanny		Primetime (N)		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Wheel-Fortune	Degrassi: Next	America's Got Talent		Supernanny		Law & Order "Excalibur"		News (N)
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy	Two/Half Men	So You Think You Can Dance The final four perform. (N)				Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Mulberry	Planet Tales (DVS)		Nova (DVS)		A Brief History of Disbelief		Business Rpt.
	297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	America's Next Top Model		Pussycat Dolls: Girlicious		CW11 News at Ten		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy!	Dr. Phil		News (N)	Jeopardy!	Frasier	Frasier	Cheers
	298	653	332	TLA	Reba	Reba	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Family Guy	Family Guy	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Next Model
news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Fortune	The Hour		CBC News: The National		The Nature of Things		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		CNN Election Center		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79	CNB	Kudlow & Company		On the Money		Saving General Motors (N)		The Big Idea With Deutsch		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22	net	World Combat League		UFC 87 Countdown		Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected		Sportsnet Con.
	400	400	30	TSN	MLB Baseball Oakland Athletics at Toronto Blue Jays. From Rogers Centre in Toronto.						SportsCentre (HDTV) (Live)		
	411	457	58	OLN	Exploration	Videos	Ed's Up	Odyssey	The Rig	Dirtbusters (N)	Word Travels	Globe Guides	Pilot Guides
	417	406	81	SC	Pinks	Pass Time (N)	Am. Thunder	Am. Thunder	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks Outtakes	Wrecked	Wrecked	Pinks
family	551	542	25	YTV	Prank Patrol	Prank Patrol	Fries That?	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Falcon Beach "Lost"		Mystery Hnt.
	554	544	45	TEL	George-Jungle	Tom & Jerry	Tom and Jerry	6teen	Total Drama	Futurama	*The Dark Crystal* ★★★ (1982, Fantasy)		
	556	540	51	FAM	That's-Raven	Smart Guy	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
cable variety	602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	Shopping Bags	Style by Jury	Smart Cookies	Stuck	Coleen's Real Women (N)		Stuck
	570	580	29	MM	Gone Wild	Gone Wild	Born to Be	Born to Be	The Shift		America's Best Dance Crew		Born to Be
	615	520	31	A&E	CSI: Miami "Innocent"		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Criss Angel	Criss Angel	Criss Angel
	700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	L'Avvocato Porta				The Sopranos (SS)		Raymond
	571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	Popaganda		Back In	Tip of Tongue	Tip of Tongue	Don't Forget the Lyrics!		Celeb. Rehab
	575	583	38	CMT	CMT30	Totally	Ult. Coyote Ugly Search		Reba	Hope & Faith	Home Improve.	Roseanne	Tara Diaries
	616	521	39	SHO	ReGenesis (HDTV)		Da Vinci's Inquest		Trailer Park	Rent-A-Goalie	Big Love "Easter"		House
	620	523	40	BVO	Literature Alive	Arts & Minds	Wingfield	Camera	Mad Men "Shoot"		Entourage	Bravonews	Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	End of Leash	Til Debt-Part	X-Weighted Dancer.		Work Out		Inside Hollywood (N)		X-Weighted
	522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Boxed In"		*Hiroshima* ★★★ (1995, Drama) Lynne Adams.				NCIS "Boxed In"		Crime Stories
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	22 Minutes	Laughs	Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Lewis Black	Tom Green	Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Property Shop	Big City Broker	Property Virgin	Unsellable	Flipping Out "Tear Down"		Holmes-Homes
	294	529	47	TBS	Family Guy	Family Guy	*The Wood* ★★ (1999, Drama) Omar Epps, Taye Diggs.				Frasier	Seinfeld	Friends
	576	582	49	BET	106 & Park	Hell Date	Access	Access	BET Hip-Hop Awards 2007				Hell Date
	627	528	50	SPC	Stargate SG-1 "Heroes"		Star Trek: Voyager		Smallville "Traveler"		Supernatural		Stargate SG-1
	581	566	52	MTV	Next	Cribs	Canada's Next Top Model		Run's House	Buzzin	Buzzin	Run's House	MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	TV Made, Do It	TV Made, Do It	ET Canada	What Happen?	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier	Family Guy
	603	561	56	FOOD	Road Grill	Licence to Grill	Restaurant Makeover		Iron Chef America		The Next Food Network Star		Challenge
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Chambers	No Place Like	Jeeves and Wooster		Long Haul, Big Hearts		Side Effects
	621	527	63	STR	Look-A-Like	Hollywood	TMZ (N)	eTalk	Celebrity Rehab With Dr. Drew		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		eTalk
	553	546	65	TRE	Wonder Pets	Nght Grdn	The Wiggles	Franklin	Little Bear	Miss Spider	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Beren. Bears
	115	711	101	TVA	Marché	Vidéos	Réal Béland donne un show		Esprits criminels (HDTV)		TVA 22 heures	Sucré-salé	*Ile-Dr Moreau*
	126	730	102	RDI	RDI en direct	400 fois Qué	Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
	526	507	249	CLT	The West Wing		Paul Merton in China		Casanova's Love Letters		Traders Gardner/Ross.		The West Wing
	300	601	301	M1	(7:15) *My Super Ex-Girlfriend* ★★ (2006), Luke Wilson				*Rush Hour 3* ★ (2007, Action)			(10:45) *Dedication*	
	305	612	306	PIX	*Catch-22*	(7:20) *Shapeshifter* ★ (1999, Fantasy)			*Jaws* ★★★★ (1975, Horror) Roy Scheider, Robert Shaw.				*Jaws 2*

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Movie Listings

🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐 A CLASSIC; 🌐🌐🌐🌐 EXCELLENT; 🌐🌐🌐 GOOD; 🌐🌐 FAIR; 🌐 POOR

This page covers movies opening today.

CINEPLEX
EMPIRE THEATRES
AMC
ALLIANCE ATLANTIS
RAINBOW CINEMAS
INDEPENDENT

Downtown

CUMBERLAND CINEMAS
159 Cumberland Ave., 416-646-0444
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 1-4:7-9:50

SCOTIABANK THEATRE TORONTO
259 Richmond St., 416-368-5600
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:30-4:30-8-10:50
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:10-3:20-6:45-9:45

VARSITY
Manulife Centre, 55 Bloor St. W., 2nd floor, 416-961-6304
Bottle Shock (14A) Wed-Thu 12:50-4:10-7:30-10:20 Wed-Thu 12:45-3:05-6:05-9:15
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:10-3:50-7:20-10:25

SILVERCITY YONGE-EGLINTON CENTRE
2300 Yonge St., 416-544-1236
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 2-4:50-7:45-10:40
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:50-4:10-7:30-10:35

West End

QUEENSWAY
1025 The Queensway, 416-503-0424
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 12:55-3:55-6:50-10:10
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:15-4:05-7:20-10:40

RAINBOW WOODBINE CENTRE
500 Rexdale Blvd., 416-213-1998
Pineapple Express (18A) Wed-Thu 12:55-4:15-7-9:35
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:40-3:45-6:50-9:15

BEACH CINEMAS
1651 Queen St. E., 416-699-5971
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:30-4:45-7:45-10:40
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 1-4:15-7:15-10:10

FESTIVAL CINEMAS FOX THEATRE
2236 Queen St. E., 416-691-7330
Creature From the Black Lagoon (STC) Tue 7
Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (PG) Fri 7 Sat-Sun 2-7 Mon 9:15 Wed 1:30
It Came From Outer Space (STC) Tue 9
The Stone Angel (14A) Wed-Thu 7
The Visitor (PG) Wed-Thu 9:15
Wanted (18A) Fri 9:30 Sat-Sun 4:15-9:30 Mon 7

North York

SHEPPARD GRANDE
4861 Yonge St., 416-590-9974
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:30-3:30-6:30-9:30

EMPIRE THEATRES @ EMPRESS WALK
5095 Yonge St., 416-223-9550
Pineapple Express (18A) Stadium Seating, No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital Wed-Thu 1:20-2:20-4:20-5:40-7:20-8:30-10:20
Swing Vote (PG) Stadium Seating, Dolby Stereo Digital Fri-Thu 1-4:15-7:10-9:55

SILVERCITY YORKDALE 6
3401 Dufferin St., 416-444-3456
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:30-4:30-7:30-10:30
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:50-4:7:15-10:15

Scarborough

COLISEUM SCARBOROUGH
300 Borough Dr., 416-290-5217
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:15-4:15-7:15-10:15
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:20-3:40-7:25-10:25

EGLINTON TOWN CENTRE
1901 Eglinton Ave. E., 416-752-4494
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:30-4:30-7:30-10:45
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:30-3:25-6:40-9:50

401 & MORNINGSIDE
785 Milner Ave., 416-281-2226
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:20-4:20-7:05-10:35
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 11:50-2:50-6:25-9:50

Peel Region

COLISEUM 10
309 Rathburn Rd., 905-275-3456
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1-4:15-7:15-10:35

COURTNEY PARK 16
110 Courtney Park Dr., 905-362-1210
Pineapple Express (18A) Special Engagement Tue 12:01 Special Engagement Wed-Thu 1-2-3:45-4:45-6:30-7:30-9:15-10:15
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Special Engagement Wed-Thu 1:05-4:05-7:25-10:25

ORION GATE GRANDE
20 Biscayne Cr., 905-455-1590
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:25-4:20-7:25-10:15
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:35-3:35-7:05-9:50

SILVERCITY MISSISSAUGA
3055 Vega Blvd., 905-569-3373
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 1:30-4:20-7:20-10:15

EMPIRE STUDIO 10 AT SQUARE ONE
100 City Centre Dr., 905-275-2640
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) No Passes, Stadium Seating Wed-Thu 12:50-1:40-3:40-4:35-6:35-7:25-9:30-10:10

North

5 DRIVE-IN
2331 Ninth Line, 905-257-8272
Pineapple Express (18A) Wed-Thu 9:15

AURORA CINEMAS
15460 Bayview Ave., 905-841-1789
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:40-4:20-8-10:40
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12-3-7:20-10:20

COLOSSUS 19
3555 Hwy 7 West, 905-851-1001
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:10-1:40-4:10-4:40-7:15-7:45-10:20-10:50

ELGIN MILLS 10 CINEMAS
10909 Yonge St., 905-770-6998
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1-4:10-7:45-10:30
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) No Passes Wed-Thu 12:15-3:15-6:45-9:45

FIRST MARKHAM PLACE
3275 Hwy 7 E., 905-474-5101
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1-4:10-7:40-10:30
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:20-3:30-7:30-10:20

INTERCHANGE 30
30 Interchange Way, 905-760-1911
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 1:30-2:20-4:10-5-6:45-7:45-9:30-10:30

SILVERCITY NEWMARKET
18151 Yonge St., 905-953-2792
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:30-4:30-7:30-10:25
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:40-4-7:15-10:10

SILVERCITY RICHMOND HILL
8771 Yonge St., 905-709-3199
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:30-4:30-7:45-10:50
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:30-4-7:10-10:25

Halton

SILVERCITY BURLINGTON 8
1250 Brant St., 416-646-0444
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:35-4:35-7:35-10:35
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 1:15-4:15-7:15-10:20

SILVERCITY BRAMPTON
50 Great Lakes, 905-789-6797
Pineapple Express (18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:40-4:45-7:45-10:45
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG) Wed-Thu 12:40-3:55-7:15-10:20

WINSTON CHURCHILL
2081 Winston Park Dr. Oakville, 905-829-2009
Pineapple Express(18A) Special Engagement Tue 12:01

Durham

AJAX
248 Kingston Rd. E, Hwy 2, 905-426-7772
Pineapple Express(18A) No Passes Wed-Thu 1:30-4:20-7:10-10:05
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 (PG)-Thu 12:40-4:15-7:40-10:20

James Franco, left, and Seth Rogen star in the new comedy Pineapple Express, in theatres today

Express rides silliness

Pineapple Express
Director: David Gordon Green
Stars: Seth Rogen, James Franco
Classification: 18A
Rating: 🌐🌐🌐½

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

These days, there likely isn't a much more critic-proof movie than Pineapple Express. Not only is it produced by comedy-king Judd Apatow but it was co-written by and stars Hollywood's favourite pot-smoking court jester, Seth Rogen. Throw in a shoot 'em up and it's a trifecta of silliness that's guaranteed to attract young audiences.

A simple story, Express is a Midnight Run-type caper about a dope-smoking process server named Dale (Rogen) who goes on the lam with his hapless drug dealer (James Franco) after witnessing a murder involving a dirty cop and a drug lord.

Together, the two stoners run, hide and get wasted becoming unlikely pals amidst the chaotic action.

And there is a fair amount of action. Rogen and co-writer Evan Goldberg were heavily inspired by such buddy/action fare as Lethal Weapon and it shows. Sure, it's a hollow story and the pacing is uneven, but this comedy still works for its unique ability to craft extremely likeable characters that aren't usually portrayed likeable in the movies. Just as they did with their script for Superbad, they do it again here.

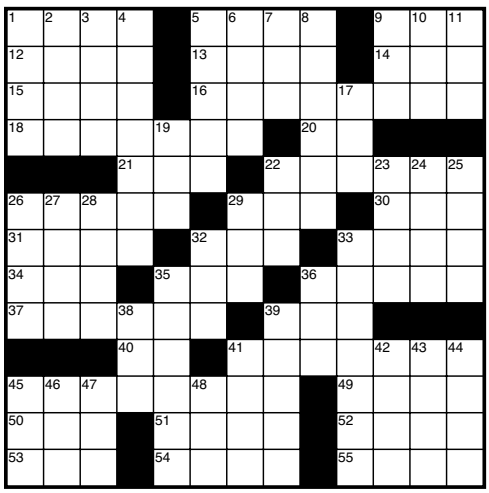
Franco is surprisingly enjoyable as the Spicoli-inspired burnout Saul while Danny McBride (Hot Rod) is sure to be crowned this summer's McLovin, stealing scenes as an indestructible mid-level dealer with shaved armpits. Don't ask.

As with Superbad, Apatow and Rogen have created an impossibly hip comedy about impossibly uncool characters. Further, they achieved an even more incredible feat: They resurrected Huey Lewis to pen a cool theme song. Who knew he still had it in him? Apparently, they did.

Directoral debut

Actor Mark Ruffalo is set to make his feature directing debut on the drama Sympathy for Delicious. Ruffalo will pull double duty on the film, co-starring along with James Franco and writer-actor Chris Thornton. **E! NEWS ONLINE**

Take Five



Crossword down

1 Rural sight
2 Name in essays
3 Romance, to Pedro
4 Rags
5 Soft-furred pet
6 Winged god
7 Mag execs
8 Fed the furnace
9 Famous Khan
10 Dawdle
11 Bartenders requests
17 Wetland area
19 Horror-flick street
22 Big tub
23 Dressy event
24 Baha'i origin
25 Still-active volcano
26 Got older
27 Summer-camp site
28 Aid and —
29 Cosmonaut space lab
32 Villain's laugh
33 Surfaced
35 Tentacle possessors
36 Downed a sub
38 Canine comment
39 Al of Indy fame
41 In that case (2 wds.)
42 Inner —
43 Important mineral
44 Dad's sister
45 Club stint
46 Lyric poem
47 Cereal grain
48 Runway hazard

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Crossword across

1 Great achievement
5 Red meat
9 Cassius Clay
12 — mater
13 Pakistani language
14 Run around
15 Public disorder
16 Horse feeders
18 Weasel cousins
20 — -cal
21 Ron who played Tarzan
22 Carrot or spud
26 Beeper
29 Ticked off
30 Museum contents
31 Chitchats
32 Bang into
33 Vitality
34 Just scrape by
35 Galley mover
36 Freezer name
37 Tear off
39 Navaho foe
40 Gridiron pos.
41 Physics topic
45 Slackers (hyph.)
49 Meditation guide
50 Wyo. neighbor
51 Work as a model
52 Poet's black
53 Hear clearly
54 Frankenstein's gofer
55 Ding a door

previous day's answer

F	E	N	■	N	I	N	J	A	■	C	U	L
O	R	E	■	A	B	O	U	T	■	N	R	A
B	E	A	■	P	U	G	S	■	A	N	N	O
■	■	■	P	U	L	P	S	■	T	D	■	■
W	H	■	M	E	R	■	S	O	O	N	E	R
H	U	T	■	S	O	A	P	O	P	E	R	A
A	G	O	G	■	F	R	A	■	T	W	I	G
R	E	T	I	C	E	N	C	E	■	T	E	E
F	R	O	Z	E	N	■	E	V	A	■	S	S
■	■	■	M	O	■	S	T	E	L	E	■	■
H	Y	P	O	■	R	E	I	N	■	G	E	M
R	I	G	■	S	H	A	M	E	■	O	W	E
S	P	A	■	T	O	N	E	D	■	S	E	W

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
You'll be taken off guard at a meeting. Someone has made noise too many times. A woman will pretend to be poverty-stricken.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Give compliments to a neglected person. Someone will try to use humour to relieve tension. You'll be unsure about dreams of power.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Don't fail to measure up to your own wisdom. A connection from the past resurfaces. Somebody wants out of an agreement.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A man's inspiring love is discovered. Don't return to the scene of a crime. Temperature becomes an impediment.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Never mind past troubles; just get on with your life. Attend to your hair and scalp needs. There's nothing worth hearing from a cynic.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Something's got to give in unhappy relationship. Don't intimidate a harmless person just for fun. A sizzling seduction has an impact.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A romantic fling can satisfy while easing anxiety. Avoid meddling. Someone will speak the magic word. Come up with some bright ideas.

SCORPIO
OCT 24- NOV 22
Mood related incidents cause heated debates. Co-workers will leave you holding the bag. Refuse to use trickery to get what you want.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23- DEC 21
Gain an advantage by doing less than expected. A boss needs help with a telephone call. Romance thrives in the evening.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Legal problems involve personality issues. Protect yourself from people who demand too much. Try to be less predictable.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
You have nerve, power and talent. Love letters excite ripples of satisfaction. Refuse to be tormented by jealousy.

PISCES
FEB 19-MAR 20
Painful memories are shared with others. A troublesome situation will be to your advantage. A tantrum grates on jagged nerves.

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This day in history

AUG. 6, 1914: World War I: Serbia declares war on Germany; Austria declares war on Russia.
AUG. 6, 1926: Gertrude Ederle becomes first woman to swim across the English Channel.
AUG. 6, 1926: Harry Houdini performs his greatest feat, spending 91 minutes underwater in a sealed tank before escaping.
AUG. 6, 1945: World War II: Hiroshima is devastated when an atomic bomb, "Little Boy," is dropped by the United States B-29 Enola Gay. Around 70,000 people were killed instantly, and some tens of thousands died in subsequent years due to burns and radiation poisoning.
AUG. 6, 1962: Jamaica becomes independent.

Sudoku

		6				9		
	7	1	2		4	3	6	
8	3						1	4
			1	2	9			
				5				
			7	8	3			
4	9						8	3
	5	2	3		8	6	7	
		8				5		

HOW TO PLAY SUDOKU:
The digits 1 through 9 will appear exactly once in each row, each column, and each zone. (A zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine of these zones in the puzzle.) Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same 3x3 zone, or in the same row across the puzzle, or column down the puzzle.

previous day's answer

7	3	1	6	9	8	2	5	4
5	6	8	3	2	4	7	1	9
2	4	9	1	7	5	3	8	6
3	1	4	9	6	2	8	7	5
9	8	7	5	1	3	6	4	2
6	2	5	8	4	7	9	3	1
1	7	3	2	5	6	4	9	8
4	9	2	7	8	1	5	6	3
8	5	6	4	3	9	1	2	7

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME IN MINUTES:

Under 13. . . . . Genius
13-17 . . . . . Scholar
17-21. . . . . Smart
21-25. . . . . Not bad
25+ . . . . . Keep practising

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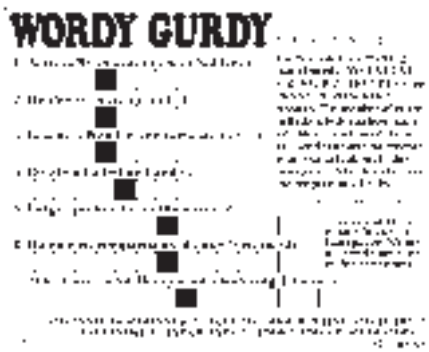

Toronto weather

The Weather Network
theweathernetwork.com

Afternoon	Tonight	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sunny. 27°	Clear. 16°	40% Showers. 25°/ 15°	60% Showers. 23°/ 15°	Mainly sunny. 23°/ 16°

Temperature
Normals
High: 26.1°
Low: 14.4°

Records
High: 35.9°/2001
Low: 6.7°/1964

Sunrise: 6:13 a.m.
Sunset: 8:34 p.m.
Moonrise: 12:11 p.m.
Moonset: 10:44 p.m.

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Splitsville
Heather Graham is single again after splitting from boyfriend Charles Ferri. The actress, 38, and the club boss had been dating for two years. A source tells People magazine the relationship was "pretty serious." IMDB.COM

Celebrity Buzz

Oprah hauls $385 million

EARNINGS Oprah Winfrey earns a whopping $385 million US a year.

Simon Cowell banks $50 million.

David Letterman? $32 million!

They're among the stars who appear in TV Guide's annual star salary survey, based on information from TV industry insiders and published sources, us-magazine.com reports.

According to TV Guide, Charlie Sheen is the highest-paid comedy star on prime-time television with $825,000 per episode.

CSI's William Peterson — who is leaving the show this upcoming season — is the highest-paid actor in a prime-time drama, earning $600,000 per episode.

With $400,000 an episode, Law & Order: SVU star Mariska Hargitay is the highest-paid actress in a drama. Kyra Sedgwick takes home $275,000 per episode of TNT's The Closer, making her top-earning actress on a cable network drama.

Some stars make serious money without appearing on TV at all.

Family Guy creator Seth MacFarlane, who supplies the voice of lead character Peter Griffin, just signed a deal with Fox that will net him $100 million through 2012.

And The Simpsons cast — Dan Castellaneta, Julie Kavner, Nancy Cartwright, Yeardley Smith and Hank Azaria — each earn $400,000 per episode.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Sexy Eva ad axed

ADVERTISEMENT Actress Eva Mendes' saucy perfume advertisement for Calvin Klein has been boycotted by several U.S. TV networks, imdb.com reports.

Bosses at national broadcasting stations are refusing to air the commercial for the company's Secret Obsession fragrance, in which the nude star writhes seductively on a bed.

Tom Murry, president of Calvin Klein Inc., tells the New York Daily News, "We believe the commercial is exceptional and hits the mark for Secret Obsession. We are anticipating a very successful global launch."

A censored clip is expected to be shown on U.S. cable networks after the 9 p.m. watershed, while the unedited version will air in full in other countries.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

celebrity brief

Olsen denies drug connection

DEATH Mary-Kate Olsen "had nothing whatsoever to do with the drugs found in Heath Ledger's home or his body, and she does not know where he obtained them," her attorney, Michael C. Miller, tells us-magazine.com. The New York Post reported Monday that Olsen, 22, is refusing to talk to investigators about Ledger's death until she is granted immunity.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

celebrity brief

Paris too busy for stage role

THEATRE Socialite Paris Hilton turned down the chance to take to the stage in London's West End because the play didn't fit in with her schedule, imdb.com reports.

The hotel heiress was recently approached to take on the role of Roxie Hart in hit musical Chicago.

But Hilton turned down the part because it meant she would have to endure a gruelling six-day week.

"I was flattered," she said, "but with my schedule, there was no way I could fit it in."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

No fertility help needed

FAMILY Actors Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt are setting the record straight about their newborn babies, Knox and Vivienne, intouchweekly.com reports.

Jolie denies Us Weekly's recent report that she underwent fertility treatments.

"If they had been conceived though IVF, we would have been happy to discuss it," she tells People magazine about the twins, who were born on July 12. "But we have been fortunate never to have had fertility problems."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Tori wants hubby in 90210

FAMILY Actress Tori Spelling has launched a bid to land her husband Dean McDermott a guest spot alongside her in the forthcoming Beverly Hills, 90210 spin-off, female-first.co.uk reports.

"Tori asked the producers to find a spot for him, maybe a guest-starring role that could turn into something permanent," a source tells the magazine.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

"This makes no sense at all..."

by Joe O'Neill

Anyone investigating **Mary-Kate Olsen** in the matter of **Heath Ledger**'s death is playing a dangerous game. If you're as familiar as I am with the movies she made with her sister Ashley, such as It Takes Two, Our Lips Are Sealed, and New York Minute, you'll know that she's an expert at switching places with her twin in order to flabbergast adults and get what she wants. It's probably the only skill she possesses, other than going up to 10 days without blinking, dressing like an alien overlord, and sharing her OxyContin, but I digress.

Once more, **Angelina Jolie** has displayed the vastness of her compassion by brushing off claims that she and **Brad Pitt** conceived their twins with the aid of fertility treatments. She knows the little people, like you and especially me, need to believe in the divine powers of our celebrities, including their ability to procreate. Also, we won't get through to breakfast tomorrow if robbed of our mental images of people far more attractive than us humping.

You can't really blame **Paris Hilton** for turning down the six-day work week of the theatre in order to maintain her schedule of go to club, go to other club, make sex tape. Either way, the performance ends up being terrible.

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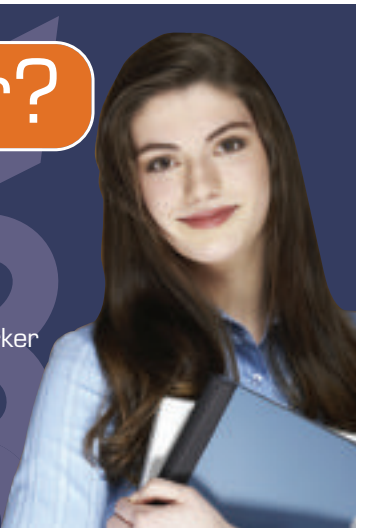

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EX model shown

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